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47. 252.











**A PICTORIAL**  
**LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.**







CHRIST CRUCIFIED. (GUIDO.)

PICTORIAL  
LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

BY

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THE 'CYCLOPÆDIA OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE,' ETC.

ABRIDGED FROM THE LIFE OF CHRIST,

IN THE

'PICTORIAL SUNDAY READING-BOOK.'

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MDCCCXLVII.





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Virgin, Child, and St. John.—(Raphael.)

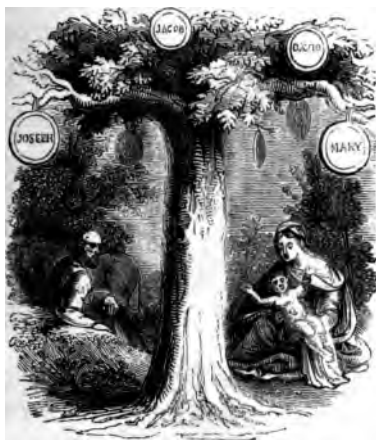
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# LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

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## CHAPTER I.

STATE OF THE WORLD AT THE TIME OF OUR LORD'S BIRTH—GENERAL EXPECTATION OF THE MESSIAH—THE BIRTH OF THE HARBINGER ANNOUNCED—THE ANGEL APPEARS TO MARY—JEWISH CUSTOM OF BETROTHMENT—CONDUCT OF JOSEPH—MEETING OF MARY AND ELIZABETH—BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.



HE history of our Lord and Saviour, JESUS CHRIST, begins at a time when the Romans had subjected nearly all the known world to their power; and their empire—the widest the world had ever seen—extended from the Tigris to the Atlantic; and from the Northern Ocean to Mount Atlas and the border of Ethiopia. The various nations comprising this mighty empire had ceased their

struggles and contentions, and were completely subjected to Rome. Most of them were under the direct rule of Governors sent from Rome; but a few were allowed to have their own native princes as governors tributary to Rome.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Among the nations thus favoured was Judæa, which was at this time governed by a king of its own, called Herod, and sur-named the Great. The family of Herod was of recent im-portance in the country, and owed its prosperity to the patronage and favour of the Roman emperors Julius, Anthony, and Au-gustus; the last of whom seems to have entertained a personal liking for Herod, to whom he allowed as much power as could be well granted to a vassal of the empire.

At this time of peace and repose, there was throughout the world a very general expectation of some great event—of the coming of some mysterious personage who was to set right what was wrong, and to subdue all things to his power. The Jews claimed a peculiar property in this Mighty Prince, knowing from their prophecies that the Messiah was to arise from among them-selves, out of the house of David. But the expectation was not confined to them; for there were abroad the whisperings of mys-terious oracles, which may be traced in the Ode of Virgil (*Pollio*), where we recognise them as reflected from the inspired strains of the Hebrew prophets.

And HE, for whom the earth was thus waiting, came—and men knew him not—knew him not *then*, because he appeared not with the visible glories and conquering powers which all expected; but came in poverty and humbleness, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

But the Son of God was not to enter without a harbinger: the world he came to redeem.

The turn of an old priest called Zacharias arrived to enter the sanctuary, and to offer incense there in behalf of the people, who remained in prayer outside. While employed in this sacred service, an angel appeared suddenly before him, and saluted him as the parent of the appointed harbinger, who was to be called

## THE ANNUNCIATION.

John. The astonished priest, knowing that he and his wife Elizabeth had lived childless to old age, could not conceal his bewilderment and doubt, and asked for some sign from which he might gather confidence. To punish his unbelief, the required sign was that he should be speechless for a season. Accordingly he went forth dumb to the wondering people, and he remained dumb until the things of which he had doubted were accomplished.

About six months after this, the same angel appeared in Nazareth, an obscure town of Galilee, to a virgin named Mary, and



The Annunciation. (Overbeck.)

hailed her as the destined mother of the Saviour of the world. The pious virgin was assured that this immortal birth was not to be according to the ordinary course of nature, but would owe its origin to the “power of the Most High.” Then, perhaps, she remembered the ancient prophecy, “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel”—God with us. (Isa. vii. 14.) She therefore bowed her head in pious



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

submission, saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word, even as thou hast said." It seems very possible that Mary did not at this time fully understand the greatness of her own destiny. She knew, however—she could not but understand,—that her promised son was to be the long foretold and earnestly desired Messiah, "the desire of all nations." The vastness of the idea, the magnificence of the event, appears to have awed her spirit, and kept down the joyfulness that afterwards arose, so that the pious contentment which she declared was the most proper expression of her feelings.

It was a custom among the Jews for damsels to be betrothed, or legally pledged, to husbands for a long while, a year or much more, before they were actually united. Now Mary was at this time under betrothment or promise of marriage to a pious man of the same place, Joseph by name, and a carpenter by trade. Any unfaithfulness to an engagement of this kind was severely punished by the Jewish law. When, therefore, Mary was about to become a mother, the mind of Joseph was filled with trouble both on her



The Angel appearing to Joseph.

## SALUTATION OF THE VIRGIN.

account and on his own. He was reluctant to make her a public example for her supposed unfaithfulness, and to bring upon her the harsh penalties of the law; but was more inclined to find some quiet way of dissolving the engagement between them. While these thoughts filled Joseph's mind, the angel appeared to him, making known the real circumstances, and the high honour which had been put upon Mary, that she should become the mother of the Saviour of the world. Joseph then no longer hesitated to take her home as his wife, and it was thus that Jesus came to be considered the son of Joseph.



Salutation of the Virgin. (Andrea del Sarto.)

It happened that Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, was a cousin of Mary, and when Mary heard that her aged relative was likely to become at length a mother, she went to congratulate her upon an event which was always a matter of great gladness to Hebrew women. It was on this occasion that the happy virgin broke forth in that beautiful chant, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," &c., which is not the less—which is much the more—touching to us, from

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

its being, in a great degree, composed from recollections of the Psalms, and of the song of Hannah, the mother of Samuel. We thus gather how well the mother of Jesus was versed in the



The Infant St. John. (Murillo.)

## JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Sacred Scripture; for her words are the outpouring of a mind thoroughly imbued with the ideas and phrases of the prophets and poets of the Old Testament.

The fact of this visit, and the relationship from which it arose, have made it appear probable that Christ and his Harbinger John were known to each other in childhood; and hence it is that in pictures of the "Holy Family" the infant Baptist is usually introduced. There is probability in the conjecture; but we have no certain knowledge of it as a fact.

In due time Elizabeth gave birth to a son. The father still continued speechless; but on the eighth day, when the child was to be named, the neighbours were disposed to call him Zacharias, after his parent; on which the father took a tablet, and wrote, "His name is JOHN," being the name which had before been given by the angel. On this his dumbness passed away, and he broke forth into an exulting hymn, praising God that the long-expected time of the Messiah was come, and that his son was destined to be his prophet and Forerunner. That Zacharias so readily understood the position which his son was to take is explained by the fact that the Jews generally expected that the Messiah was to be preceded by a dignified Harbinger. This expectation was founded upon passages in the prophets (Isa. xl. 3; Mal. iv. 5), which also led to a prevalent notion that this Forerunner was to be no other than Elijah the Tishbite in person; although some were content to expect one equal to that great prophet in power, and endued with the same spirit (Luke i. 17).

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The Nativity.—(Rembrandt.)

## BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER II.

THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD IS BORN AT BETHLEHEM—AN ANGEL ANNOUNCES HIS BIRTH TO SHEPHERDS—THEY LEAVE THEIR FLOCKS AND GO TO WORSHIP HIM—THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM—JOY OF THE AGED SIMEON AND ANNA—THE HOLY FAMILY RETURN TO BETHLEHEM—ARRIVAL OF THE WISE MEN IN JERUSALEM—ALARM OF HEROD—ADORATION OF THE MAGI—FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.



Cherubim and Seraphim. (Reynolds.)



THE Roman emperor, not long after this, commanded a census, or general account of the population, to be taken: and the decree required every one to be registered in his paternal city. This obliged Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem, to which, being of the house and lineage of David, they belonged. The lateness of their arrival was probably the reason which obliged them to take up their lodging in the stables which run behind the Eastern inns or caravanseries, the lodging-room being already occupied.

Here, among the beasts of the stall, was born THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD; and here, when he had been wrapped in swaddling-clothes, a manger was made to serve for his cradle.

This was the greatest event the world had ever seen—for it was

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

the coming of its Redeemer. It was an event which shook Hell, and caused rejoicings through all the saints of heaven, but it might have passed as a common occurrence on the earth had not the



The Nativity. (Carlo Maratti.)

angels of God taken notice of it. There were abroad **that night** in the common around Bethlehem shepherds keeping their **flocks**; for in the Eastern countries, where there are no enclosures, **flocks** must needs be watched by shepherds night and day. They were aroused from their half-slumbering watch by a sudden **radiance** which shone around them from the presence of an angel, whose appearance filled them with dread. But they were reassured by the glad and cheerful voice with which he announced the glad tidings of great joy. "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour—which is Christ, the Lord." There was not a man, woman, or child in Israel who did not expect such a personage. The shepherds, therefore, had not the slightest difficulty in understanding this joyous news. And where were they to seek this greatest of woman born? They were told to seek him, not in royal palaces or priestly courts, nor lapped in

## ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS.

splendour in the mansions of the great, but —“ Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger.” And immediately there gathered around the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, who broke forth in praise to God for his love to man, and proclaiming in exulting chants— “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.”



Ministering Angel. (L. Signorelli.)

The shepherds thought no more of their flocks, but hastened



The Adoration of the Shepherds.



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

away to Bethlehem, and having found the infant lying in a manger, as the angel had described, they made known all that they had seen and heard. Many wondered, but most, even those who wondered, let the matter pass from their minds, till some thirty or forty years after, when the history of "the prophet of Nazareth" became a matter of general talk, and then probably some old people called to mind the circumstances which attended the birth of the holy child at Bethlehem. Mary, now a blessed mother, wondered also: but SHE forgot nothing—"SHE pondered these things in her heart" (Luke ii. 1—20).

On the eighth day from the birth the child was circumcised; and, according to the custom of giving a name at the time of circumcision, he then received the name of JESUS, which had been given to him by the angel who first announced his birth. JESUS is the Greek form (the New Testament being written in Greek) of the Hebrew name Joshua, which was not uncommon among the Hebrews. It means *a Saviour*; and was therefore the most proper name in actual use which could have been chosen for the Messiah.

The law required that every Hebrew woman should be separated from the congregation for forty days after the birth of a male, and for eighty days after the birth of a female child. At the expiration of that time the mother was to repair to the Temple, to make the customary offerings. This offering was a lamb for those who could afford it; but those who were not able to bring a lamb might offer a pair of turtle-doves or of young pigeons (Lev. xii. 2, 6, 8; Luke ii. 22—24). The mother of Jesus gave the humbler offering; and as she probably would not have done this if a lamb could have been afforded, we have thus an incidental but touching evidence of the humble circumstances under which He—who was greater than all potentates—was born and reared.

## THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.



The Presentation in the Temple. (F. Bartolomeo di S. Marco.)

This also shows that the visit of the Magi took place after and not before Mary's visit to the Temple, for their rich gifts would have furnished means for the more costly offering.

At the same time the child was to be presented before the Lord, and if it were a first-born son he was to be redeemed from the obligations of priestly services by the payment of five shekels of silver (Exod. xiii. 2, 11—14; Luke ii. 23). The presentation of Jesus was distinguished by a very remarkable circumstance. There was an aged man at Jerusalem of the name of Simeon, who lived in earnest expectation of the manifestation of the long promised Messiah, and it had been revealed to him that his aged eyes should behold the Lord's Christ before they closed in death. He entered the Temple at the moment of the presentation, and recognising at once the holy child he took him in his arms, and blessed God that the long-hoped-for day had dawned at last. A very aged and devout woman, called Anna, who was a constant frequenter of the Temple, was also present, and shared in the joy of Simeon. From Jerusalem the holy family did not proceed home to

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Nazareth, but returned to Bethlehem. This is not said, but it is implied in the connection of the narrative (Luke ii. 38 ; Matt. ii. 1). Various reasons have been assigned for this step, but the most probable one seems to be that, as Jerusalem was only six miles from Bethlehem, they proceeded to the Temple on the day appointed by the law, and then returned to tarry a little longer with their friends, or to wind up their affairs before they proceeded to their distant home. It is, however, not unlikely that Mary, who, as we have seen, was familiar with the Scriptures relating to the Messiah, may have preferred Bethlehem on account of Micah v. 2, and from the fame of the angelic vision which the shepherds witnessed.

Some time after the holy family had returned to Bethlehem, a strong sensation was produced at Jerusalem by the arrival of certain Eastern sages inquiring publicly for him who was born King of the Jews, and declaring that, while in the far East, they had seen his star, and had come to offer him their homage.

The inquiries of these distinguished foreigners reached the ears of Herod, and excited in him much jealousy and alarm. He was led at once to conclude that the expected Messiah was come ; and as he partook of the general mistake respecting the earthly nature of that kingdom which Christ would establish, he saw nothing in this but ruin and overthrow to himself and his family. Although he beheld in this event the accomplishment of ancient prophecies, and of the desire on which the heart of the nation was fixed, yet his own selfish ends led him to plot the destruction of so dangerous a claimant of sovereignty. To this end he assembled the ecclesiastical authorities, and required to know the place which prophecy indicated as the birth-place of Christ. Citing Micah v. 2, as their authority, they with one voice declared that Bethlehem was the appointed place ; and accordingly the crafty and



The Holy Family. (Sir Joshua Reynolds.)

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

unscrupulous tyrant told the wise men to seek the Messiah in that city; and commanded them, when they had found him, to return and impart the result to him, under the pretence that he also wished to go and worship him.

The Magi then repaired to Bethlehem, and, being guided by the star, which re-appeared before them, they soon discovered

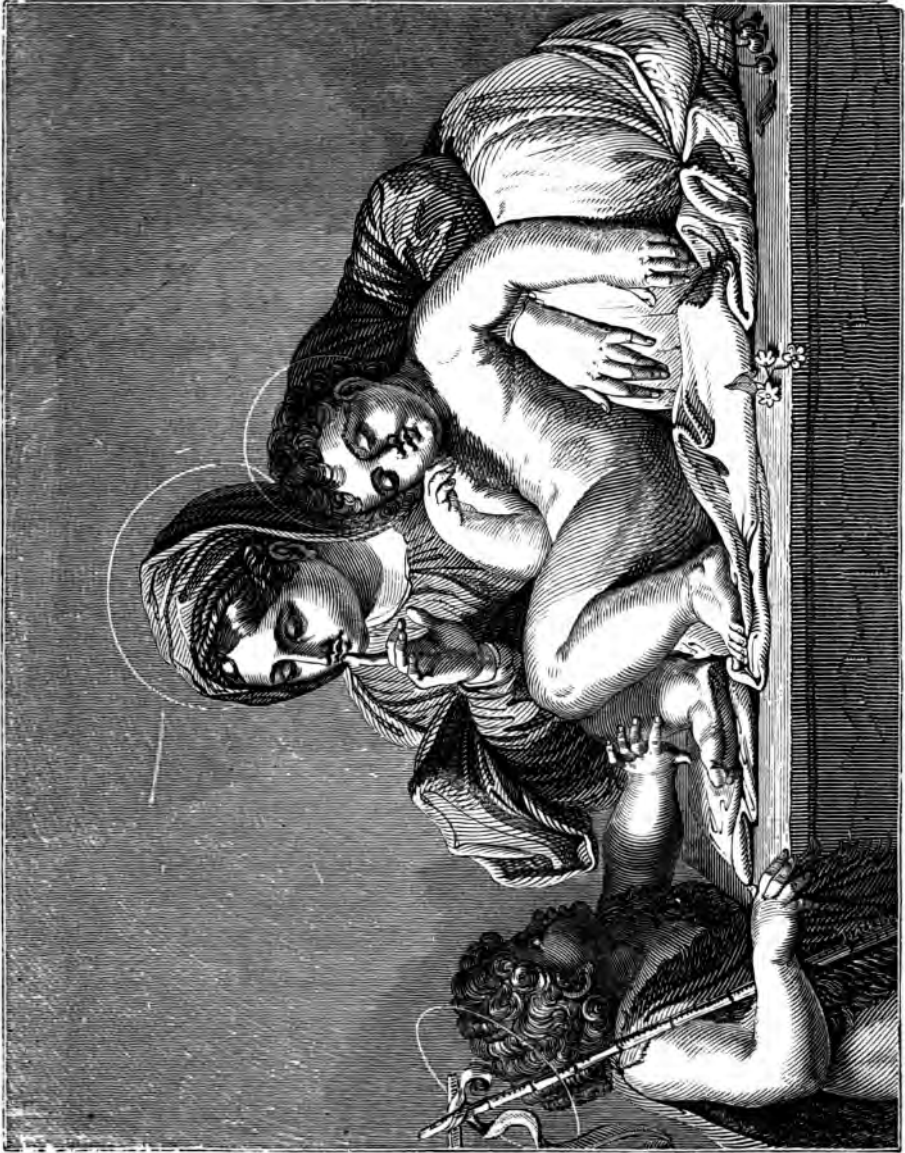
the infant Jesus. The humble circumstances by which they found him surrounded made no change in their purpose: "they fell down and worshipped him," and then, according to the custom of the East for all persons admitted to an audience to offer gifts of more or less value, the strangers "opened their treasures, and presented to him gold, frankincense, and myrrh," and these gifts are supposed by many to have been typical of their allegiance and their hopes.



The Wise Men's Offering. (Rubens.)

They then returned home, without passing through Jerusalem as Herod had required, according to a warning which they had received in a dream. Another warning, similarly conveyed to Joseph, occasioned the holy family to withdraw into Egypt, which was then, and had long been, the general refuge for all who were oppressed, or discontented, or apprehended danger in Israel.





Virgin, Child, and St. John. (Annibale Carracci.)

## SLAUGHTER OF THE INFANTS AT BETHLEHEM.

### CHAPTER III.

DISAPPOINTMENT OF HEROD—HIS CRUELTY—HIS DEATH—DIVISION OF HIS KINGDOM—THE ANGEL APPEARS TO JOSEPH—THE HOLY FAMILY RETURN INTO THE LAND OF JUDEA—THEY DWELL AT NAZARETH—PRESENT APPEARANCE OF BETHLEHEM—OF NAZARETH—FEELINGS EXCITED BY A VIEW OF THOSE PLACES.



WHEN King Herod saw that the Eastern magi had gone home without again visiting Jerusalem, his vexation was great, for he thereby lost all means of distinguishing from among all the infants of Bethlehem the one whom he had destined to destruction. He was not a man who ever paused at any steps necessary to the accomplishment of the designs which he had once taken into his mind. From this cause his reign was full of horrors; and much as we may be shocked, those who know his character feel no surprise to find that he at once determined to sweep away all the infants of Bethlehem under two years old, that the one he had doomed might not escape. This purpose was accomplished. The Evangelists simply state the fact without giving particulars of the dreadful scene. No doubt the tyrant now thought himself relieved from the cause of his misgivings, not knowing that all this most innocent blood had been shed without any profit to him, for his destined victim had escaped.

It may in some degree illustrate this transaction to bear in mind that Herod must at this very time have been suffering great torments from the painful malady of which he died. This com-



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

plaint was a dreadful disease in the bowels; according to Josephus, a devouring fire seemed to rage within him, and his pains were unutterable, while his inner parts underwent a constant dying and corruption. His person became loathsome to all who approached him, and he was consumed by a fierce hunger which nothing could appease. This kind of disease was regarded by the Jews and other Asiatics as a chastisement specially reserved by God for the punishment of unrighteous and tyrannous kings; and certainly, such an ending of such a career is well calculated to call forth the thought, "Verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth!"

In vain did Herod summon famous physicians from far countries to Jerusalem; in vain did he repair to the warm springs of Callirhoe;—there was no help for him, and he saw that his last hour was at hand. He then sent an urgent summons to the principal persons of Jerusalem to attend him at Jericho, and there caused them to be shut up in the hippodrome, leaving orders that they should all be slain as soon as he had expired. His avowed reason was, that, knowing he was hated by the Jews, he was resolved there should be mourning at his death. But a dead tyrant can no longer ensure obedience, and when he actually died they were set free.

In his last will Herod made a distribution of his dominions among his sons, which was in the main afterwards confirmed by the Emperor Augustus. The kingdom of Judæa he gave to Archelaus; to Herod Antipas, the tetrarchy of Galilee and of Peræa beyond Jordan; to Philip, the tetrarchy formed by the districts of Trachonitis, Gaulonitis, and Batanæa (Bashan), all beyond the Jordan.

Herod the Great expired thirty years after he had been declared king of the Jews by the Roman senate, and thirty-four

## THE HOLY FAMILY AT NAZARETH.

years from his actual possession of the throne. He was honoured with a more magnificent funeral than any king of Israel before him; but few, if any, were the real tears shed at his death.

Meanwhile the Holy Family remained in Egypt. The gifts of the Eastern sages no doubt enabled them to travel thither, and to live there in comfort. But we have no authentic accounts of the travel or the sojourn. An old tradition of the Greek Church alleges that the family tarried at Hermopolis; and at a place called Matarieh, between Cairo and Heliopolis, corresponding to the situation of the ancient city of that name, there is a fountain at which it is pretended that the Virgin was wont to lave the infant Jesus, and which is on that account held in much veneration throughout the country.

When Herod was dead, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, and enjoined him to return to the land of Israel. He accordingly took the young child and its mother, and returned into Judæa. It seems to have been his first intention to remain there, probably at Bethlehem; but finding that Archelaus reigned, and fearing that he might have inherited the temper of his father, it was deemed more prudent to proceed to Nazareth, which, being in Galilee, was under the different government of Herod Antipas.

The abode from infancy in Nazareth, coupled with the fact

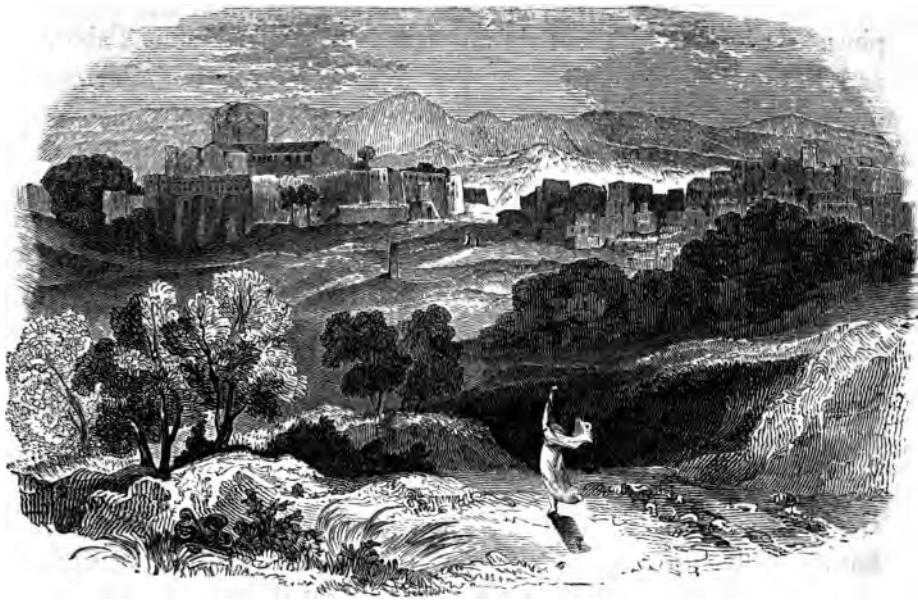


Virgin, Child, and St. John. (Raphael.)

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

that Mary and Joseph belonged to that place, occasioned Jesus to be regarded and called "a Nazarene," although, in fact, a native of Bethlehem. This was afterwards often given as an objection to his being the Messiah; for it was well known (especially since the formal decision which the priests and scribes had communicated to Herod) that Bethlehem was the place from which the Messiah was to come. Hence the strongly expressed objection of some people, when at a future time his claim was under discussion—"Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" (John vii. 42.)

BETHLEHEM derives all its celebrity from having been the birthplace of David and of Christ. It was, indeed, fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi. 6), but does not seem to have been ever of much consequence. It is expressly described as "small" by the prophet Micah (v. 2), in the very passage which pointed it out as the birthplace of the Messiah—"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though thou be little among the thousands of Judah*, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel," &c. Ephratah (*the fruitful*) was the name which the place bore in the time of the patriarchs (Gen. xlviii. 7), and which was still sometimes used after it had acquired the name of Bethlehem. It is pleasantly situated about six miles to the south of Jerusalem, and stands upon the brow of a hill which commands an extensive view of the surrounding mountainous country. The hill itself is laid out in terraced vineyards, almond-groves, and plantations of fig-trees, watered by gentle rivulets that murmur through the terraces, and diversified by watch-towers and wine-presses. It is now a large village, chiefly composed of one long street of flat-roofed houses built with clay and bricks. The inhabitants are about three thousand in number, mostly



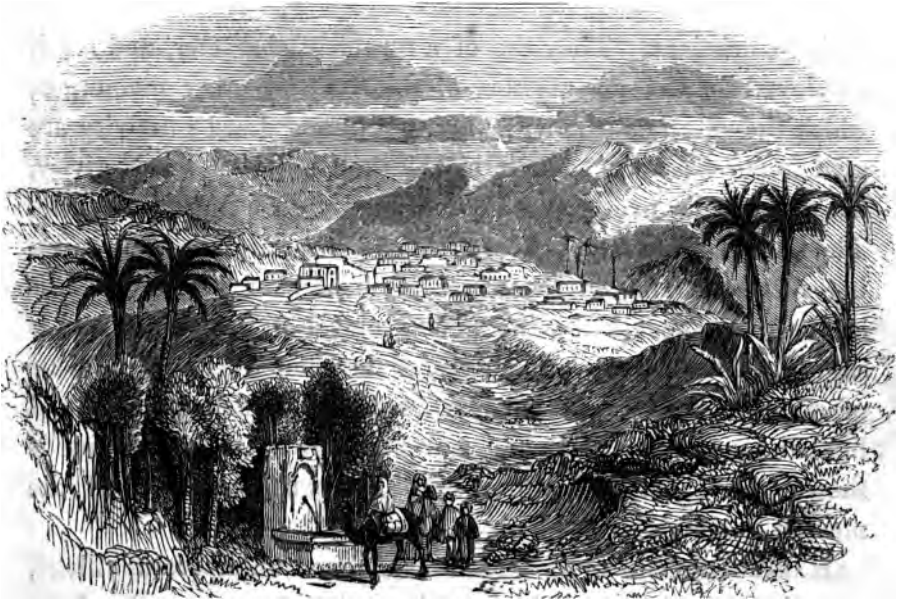
Bethlehem.

native Christians. They are of a turbulent character, and much employed in the manufacture of rosaries and other memorials, which the pilgrims who visit the spot of our Lord's nativity are glad to purchase. A church, called the Church of the Nativity, has been built over the supposed site of this illustrious birth. The church is old, and is accounted the finest architectural building now remaining in Palestine. It contains a grotto, which is about twenty feet below the general level of the church, and is shown, with very little probability, as the place where the Saviour of men was born. This cave is lined with Italian marbles, and lighted by numerous lamps: and here the reverent pilgrim is shown the exact spot where our Lord was born, and of the manger in which he was laid.

NAZARETH seems to have been a small and unimportant village, for it is not mentioned either in the Old Testament or by Jose-

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

phus. It is situated about six miles W.N.W. from Mount Tabor, and lies on the western side of a narrow oblong basin or depressed valley about a mile long by a quarter broad. The houses stand on the lower part of the slope of the western hill, which rises steep and high above them. It is a small and more than usually well built place, containing about three thousand inhabitants, of whom about two-thirds are Christians. The flat-roofed houses are built of stone, and mostly two stories high. The environs are planted with luxuriantly growing fig-trees, olive-trees, and vines; and the crops of corn are scarcely equalled through the length and breadth of Canaan. All the spots which could be supposed to be in any way connected with the history of Christ are, of course, pointed out by the monks and local guides, but on authority too precarious to deserve any credit, and with circumstances too puerile for reverence. It is enough to know



Nazareth.



Mount Carmel.

our Lord dwelt here; that for thirty years he trod this spot of earth, and was familiar with the scenes which are spread around. Professor Robinson, looking around from the hill above, which commands an extensive prospect, succeeded in realizing this more general point of view:—"I remained for some hours upon the spot, lost in the contemplation of the wide prospect, and of the events connected with the scenes around. In the village below the Saviour of the world had passed his childhood; and although we have few particulars of his life during those early years, yet there are certain features of nature which meet our eyes now just as they once met his. He must often have visited the fountain near which we had pitched our tent; his feet must frequently have wandered over the adjacent hills; and his eyes doubtless have gazed upon the splendid prospect from this very spot. Here the Prince of Peace looked down upon the great plain [of Esdraelon] where the din of battle so oft had rolled, and the garments of the warrior been dyed in blood; and he looked out too upon that sea over which the swift ships were to bear the tidings of his salvation to nations and to continents then unknown!"

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER IV.

THE ONLY RECORDED INCIDENT OF OUR LORD'S CHILDHOOD—CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN JUDÆA—OUR LORD'S FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM—IMPORTANCE OF THE EVENT—THE RETURN TOWARDS NAZARETH—JESUS IS MISSING—HIS PARENTS SEEK HIM, SORROWING—THEY FIND HIM IN THE TEMPLE—HIS MYSTERIOUS REPLY TO THEIR QUESTIONS—JESUS RETURNS WITH THEM, AND IS SUBJECT UNTO THEM.



NOT more than one incident of our Lord's childhood is recorded in the Scriptures, and that occurred when he was twelve years of age. There have indeed been many spurious anecdotes of this period, some of which, picked up in the days of ignorance, still linger in the memories of uneducated people. These originated in certain traditions and Apocryphal Gospels, some of which still exist among the curiosities of literature, but which no one regards as entitled to the slightest credit in any of the statements which they offer. The canonical Gospels are the only sources of our real information concerning Jesus, and to them we must adhere.

But before Jesus attained the age of twelve years some changes had taken place in Palestine. Judæa had ceased to be a kingdom, and was become a Roman province, with a Roman Governor. This would at first seem to have been a disadvantage to the Jews. But it was not so. The government of the Herodian family was never considered by them as native, and was never popular among them. The tyrannous conduct of Archelaus rendered him odious to both Jews and Samaritans; it was in consequence of their

## JUDÆA A ROMAN PROVINCE.

united complaints to the Emperor that he was, after a proper investigation of the circumstances, deposed and banished to Vienne in Gaul. At the earnest desire of the same parties Judæa and Samaria were then constituted a Roman province, of which Cyrenius or Quirenius was appointed the first Prefect or Governor. We are not, however, to suppose that this arose from any attachment to the Roman government on the part of the Jews. Far from it. They detested the Romans and their government. But they feared that another member of the Herodian family might be put in the place of Archelaus; and of two evils, all sensible men thought even the stern rule of the Romans far preferable to the vexatious tyranny of petty despots and mock sovereigns. In effecting this change of government, the complete enjoyment of their own laws and religion was continued to the Jews. The power of life and death was indeed taken from them, but they were allowed to try offences in their own way, and the Governor seldom failed to confirm and execute the sentences of their tribunals.

This change of government took place in the year 10 A.D. of the actual year from Christ's birth, but in the year 7 A.D. of the vulgar era. Most of our readers know that at the time when the Birth of Christ was assumed as the era of Christians, a mistake of three or four years was made in the calculation. For general purposes it is proper to retain the vulgar era, although known to be wrong; but as our purpose is limited to the life of Christ, and as within that narrow range it is highly desirable that the dates should be facts, we shall date from the real year of Christ's birth, assuming it to have been three years before the vulgar era.

The law of Moses required that all the males of fit age in Israel should three times in the year appear before God, at the place of his altar and sanctuary. These times were, at the feast of the



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Passover, of the Pentecost, and of Tabernacles, of which the first was by far the most important as a matter of obligation, and the most generally observed. Children were not usually taken to Jerusalem till twelve years of age, at which time they came under the obligation of this law, and commenced their periodical attendance at Jerusalem. Women were not required to take these journeys, nor did they usually do so; but they seldom failed to accompany their sons when they went up for the first time to the Temple. The son then assumed one of the responsible obligations of manhood, and in one point of view the first attendance at Jerusalem had the same import and significance as the assumption of the *toga virilis* by the Roman youth. It was therefore one of those marked points in the life of a son in which mothers wish to take part, and which they love to celebrate. We have in this the reason why Jesus was accompanied not only by Joseph but by Mary, when, at the age of twelve years, he went up to the Passover-feast at Jerusalem.

This, the first visit to Jerusalem, was an occasion to which every male child in Israel looked forward with eager expectation and desire. Conceive the glad assemblage of neighbours in the early morning, outside the town or village, and the animated interchange of salutations and farewells till the appointed voice cried, "It is time to depart." Then they marched onward leisurely, with minstrelsy and psalms, and as they went were joined at the meeting of the roads, and in the villages, by new parties bent on the same object—their happy faces suiting well their holiday attire. They needed no provision for this journey; for wherever they passed they were received with shouts of joy and blessing; and before every door tables laden with bread, honey, and dates were set forth for their refreshment. Conceive the pride of the lads who were for the first time privileged to join this cheerful

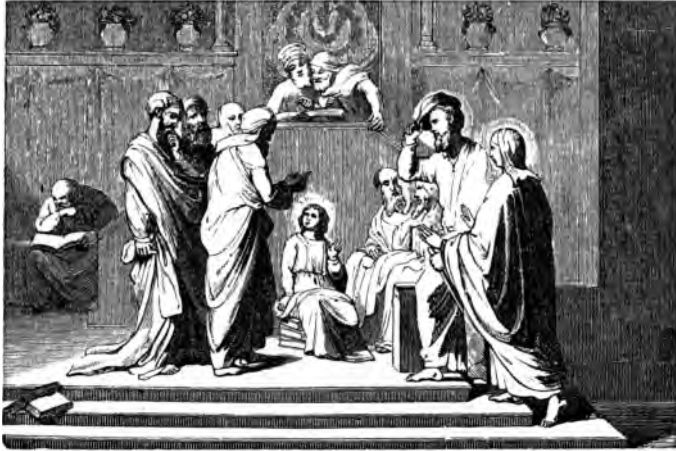
## PASSOVER-FEAST AT JERUSALEM.

pilgrimage; conceive the sorrow of those who were not yet of the due age, when those who were going thus up to "the city of the Great King," and to walk in the courts of his "holy and beautiful house," passed on, leaving them behind.

When they drew near the city, parties who had already arrived, and many of the stated inhabitants, would hasten forth to meet the new-comers and conduct them to their respective quarters. At that season no inhabitant of Jerusalem considered his house as his own. The city was the city of the whole people, not of the inhabitants alone; and when Israel came up to appear before Jehovah, every citizen regarded his dwelling as belonging to his brethren as much as to himself. Every house was thus filled with strangers, and the master was usually the worst accommodated person in it. But the utmost liberality of the inhabitants could not provide lodging for all the vast multitudes which repaired on these occasions to Jerusalem. A large number of the pilgrims, therefore, remained in tents during the festival. The whole neighbourhood of Jerusalem was then turned into an encampment, and all the streets and open places, and all the hills and valleys around the city, were covered with tents. But the feast was at the finest season of the year; the days were balmy and the nights enjoyed the full moon, so that those who remained altogether without shelter experienced little inconvenience.

Having celebrated the feast in Jerusalem, the party from Nazareth returned; and it was not until the evening of the first day's journey that Mary and Joseph became alarmed at the absence of their son, whom they had supposed to be with some kinsfolk or neighbours in another part of their large company. But as in such cases the different members of the same family join each other in the evening camp, and as Jesus came not, and could not be found, they returned the next day to Jerusalem to

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.



Christ with the Doctors in the Temple. (Overbeck.)

seek him there. This return occupied the second day. On the third day they searched the city, and at length found him in the Temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers" (Luke ii. 46, 47). We are not to suppose that he was in the building of the Temple itself, which none but the priests might enter, but in the area of the Temple—in one of the courts or porticoes, where the doctors of the law used to sit and deliver their instructions. Neither are we to suppose that he thus early, and among these venerable persons, took the part of a teacher, for the allusion to his "questions" and his "answers" is explained by our knowledge that the Jewish doctors pursued such a plan of instruction as dealt much in interrogation on the part both of the teacher and the taught. The fact that he sat among them does not require that explanation; for they might naturally wish to show this indulgence towards so extraordinary and highly-gifted a child.

In answer to the gentle remonstrance of his mother, who said,

## HIS CHILDHOOD.

“Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing;” Jesus answered, “How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” This was a hard saying, and was not understood by those that heard it; but Mary, ever mindful of his mysterious birth, kept this among the other hard sayings which she pondered in her loving heart.

They then returned to their home in Nazareth, where Jesus rendered that willing obedience which children owe to their parents. This obedience he rendered not only to Mary, but to Joseph, as his reputed father, to whom he owed his living, and who seems to have instructed him in his own trade of a carpenter. Thus Jesus remained many years, “increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER V.

EARLY LIFE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—HE PREACHES IN THE WILDERNESS—MULTITUDES FOLLOW HIM—AND ARE BAPTIZED OF HIM AT BETHABARA—BAPTISM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST—VISIBLE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—FASTING AND TEMPTATION OF THE MESSIAH—ANGELS MINISTER UNTO HIM—JOHN'S RECOGNITION OF HIM AS THE LAMB OF GOD—CALLING OF PHILIP.



St. John in the Wilderness. (Reynolds.)



JOHN, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, afterwards surnamed the Baptist, was to be both in his birth and ministry the Harbinger of Christ—the Preparer of his way—and hence the Evangelical record returns to him, as the time for the public appearance of the Messiah approached.

As John grew up, he became strong in spirit, and more and more fitted for the high mission to which he had, even before his birth, been

## PREACHING OF JOHN.

appointed. In his native mountains—for he was of “the hill country of Judea”—he gradually formed habits of life in accordance with the austere character of his future ministry. At length he assumed the camel’s-hair vesture and leathern girdle of a prophet, withdrew into the rocky wildernesses near the Dead Sea and the Jordan, and dwelt apart, subsisting on rock-honey and on the locusts which are still in that country counted as wholesome and nutritive food.

The precise time at which his ministry began is uncertain. The voice of God at length came to him in the wilderness, and he commenced his mission by proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. The appearance of the Prophet of the



John preaching. (Stothard.)

wilderness reminded the people of Elias, in whose spirit and power he came, and produced a strong sensation throughout the country. Multitudes of all classes and sects followed him, or resorted to him. He paused at Bethabara, one of the fords of the Jordan, and there baptized in that venerable stream such of

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his hearers as were duly impressed by what they heard from him. Many flocked to his preaching at Bethabara, to whom he gave exhortations suited to their condition and their faith. Some of these have been preserved by the Evangelists, and convey to us a clear impression of the important matter and the pointed and forcible style of his instructions. The burden of all his preaching



Penitence.

was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" and he constantly declared that his was the Voice in the wilderness appointed to cry, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Isa. xl. 3; Matt. iii. 3). Alarmed by the warnings and encouraged by the hopes which he held forth, the Jews in great numbers were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. To the questions of the different classes of people who addressed him, the Prophet replied by exhortations to charity

and truth. The publicans, he warned against extortion; the soldiers against violence; and the formalists, the scribes, and Pharisees, he attacked with a severity which showed him in this also a forerunner of Christ. "O generation of vipers," he cried, "who hath warned *you* to flee from the wrath to come? Think not to say unto yourselves, we have Abraham for our father (*i. e.* relying on that as an all-sufficient merit); for verily I say unto you, that God is able even out of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." This was a hard saying for them, especially from one who himself belonged to the priesthood.

## HIS BAPTISM.

All these things, and this new style of discourse, drew the most earnest attention towards the Prophet. The ecclesiastical authorities at Jerusalem sent some of their own body to obtain clear information respecting his claims, and the character in which he appeared. They asked him if he was not himself the Christ so long expected; but, faithful to his trust, and humble in his highest glory, he readily admitted that he was not. Receiving similar answers to various other conjectures, they at length impatiently asked, "Who art thou? What sayest thou of thyself?" He gave his usual answer to such questions—"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness," &c. They then asked on what ground he baptized, if he were not the Christ. To which he answered, "I, indeed, baptize with water unto repentance; but one mightier than I cometh, whose shoes (sandals) I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

All this time that John was preaching the near approach of the Messiah, he remained in ignorance of his person. In all probability he was acquainted with Jesus, who was his near relation; but he knew not, he could scarcely suspect, that he was



John baptizing Christ. (Rubens.)



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the Messiah: he however knew that in due time the Christ of God would be pointed out to him, in a manner not to be mistaken, and with this he was satisfied.

At length, among those who came to be baptized at Bethabara, was Jesus, who had hitherto lived and laboured with Joseph and Mary at Nazareth. John, having some presentiment of the truth, at first repelled him, saying, "*I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?*" But Jesus persisted, and went down into the river, where he received baptism at the hands of John. As he came up out of the water, the sign expected by the Baptist to denote the Messiah was given. He saw the heavens open, and the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and resting upon Jesus, while a Voice was heard declaring, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" From that time John bore witness that Jesus was the Son of God.



The Temptation in the Wilderness.

From Mark i. 25, we learn that it was immediately after his baptism and public recognition as the Messiah, that Jesus withdrew into the wilderness, where he remained for forty days

## THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS.

without food. It was usual for those who entered upon the prophetic office to prepare themselves for its important duties by fasting and prayer,—by prayer so earnest and long continued that they sometimes neglected to take food, and this seems to have been the case with Jesus. At the end of the forty days, Satan was permitted to subject his virtue and high purposes to such a trial of proof as might suitably introduce him to his public ministry. The particulars of this Temptation are recorded, with some slight variations, in the fourth chapter of Matthew and the fourth of Luke. Jesus was hungry, and Satan tempted him to obtain food by an unwarranted exercise of the miraculous powers which belonged to him. Failing in this, he placed him in danger



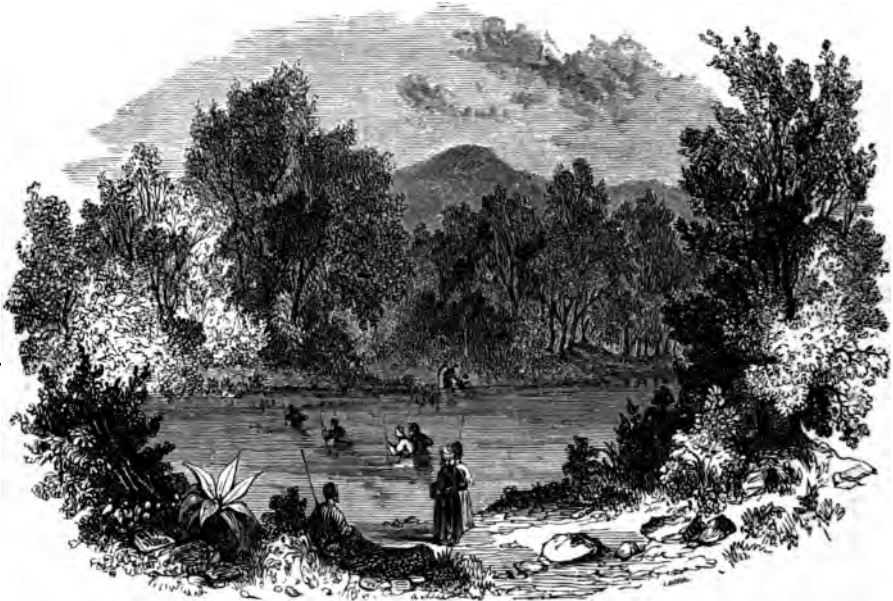
Ministering Angels.

on the highest point of the Temple, and urged him to cast himself down, in the assurance that the angels would bear him harmless up, if he were indeed the Son of God. Foiled also in this, Satan transported him to the top of a high mountain, and promised him,

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in exchange for his homage, dominion over the wide lands which he surveyed ; but receiving a signal and final rebuff, he departed, leaving Jesus still in the mountainous wilderness beyond the Jordan, where angels came and ministered unto him.

Returning from thence towards Galilee, Jesus had to cross the Jordan at the ford of Bethabara, where John was still baptizing,



The River Jordan.

and made some pause in the neighbourhood. He was probably present at the interview already mentioned between John and the commission from Jerusalem ; for John said then, “ There is one *standing among you* whom ye know not : he it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me.” At all events, it was the very day after that interview, that John, seeing Jesus coming towards him, publicly pointed him out as the Messiah to all who were then present, in the emphatic words, “ Behold the

## CALLING OF ANDREW AND PETER.

Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. *This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is preferred before me.* The next day John again pointed out Jesus as “the Lamb of God,” when he observed him walking by. Two of John’s own



Calling of Andrew and Simon Peter.

disciples who heard this, then went and followed Jesus. One of these was John and the other Andrew, both of them fishermen of the Lake of Tiberias. Jesus, observing that they were following his steps, turned and asked, “What seek ye?” Which they answered by another question, indicative of their desire to attach themselves to him, and to know him better—“Master, where dwellest thou?” He answered, “Come and see.” They accordingly attended him to the place where he lodged, and remained with him the rest of that day, which was then near its close.

Andrew, after quitting Jesus for the day, rested not till he had found his brother Simon, to whom he imparted the glad tidings—“We have found the Messias!” and the next day he

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

took him to Jesus. On his approach, and before he had been announced, Jesus saluted him with "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas!" This word means "a stone," and is accordingly rendered in Greek by PETER, which has the same meaning. It was not unusual in those times for chiefs, masters, and teachers, to impose new and significant names, after this manner, upon those who became their servants or disciples. (John i. 41, 42.)

The next day Jesus proceeded into Galilee on his return to Nazareth, and on the way met with Philip of Bethsaida, and said to him, "Follow me." Philip was of the same town as Andrew and Peter, and, having been probably apprised by them that Jesus was the Messiah, he unhesitatingly obeyed the call. This was the first case in which Christ employed this form of summon, which he used in making choice of those whom he intended to follow him as his disciples.



Haircloth.

## PHILIP AND NATHANIEL.

### CHAPTER VI.

OUR LORD'S CONVERSATION WITH NATHANIEL—THE MARRIAGE FEAST OF CANA—CUSTOMS OF THE JEWS ON SUCH OCCASIONS—FIRST MIRACLE OF CHRIST—ITS PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE—APPROACH OF THE PASSOVER—JESUS GOES UP TO JERUSALEM—FINDS THE TEMPLE PROFANED—HE EXPELS THE MONEY-CHANGERS, AND THOSE WHO HOLD A MARKET IN THE SACRED COURTS.



ANDREW and Peter, although they had in a certain sense attached themselves to our Lord, had not yet been called in that peculiar manner which required them to be in constant attendance upon his person : it is, therefore, to Philip that we may assign the honour of being the first “called” disciple of Christ. In this, as in the former case, the discovery of the Christ so long expected, and so earnestly desired, was a matter of too high interest and importance to be kept secret. Accordingly, no sooner did Philip meet with an old acquaintance called Nathaniel than he cried out, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nazareth, being a mean place, and the inhabitants of indifferent character, was despised even among the Galileans, who were themselves contemned by the people of Judea. Knowing this, and being aware that the Christ was expected to come from Bethlehem, Nathaniel caught at the word Nazareth, and asked, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip gave the best possible answer, “Come and see.” They accordingly went to Jesus, who no sooner saw Nathaniel approach than he said, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” Surprised

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beyond measure, Nathaniel asked, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus answered, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." It was not unusual for educated men among the Jews to study the law under fig-trees, and sometimes, although more rarely, to pray there. This may indicate the act which Jesus had in view. This answer implied our Lord's knowledge of the private conversation between Philip and himself, and also of acts performed by him in the secrecy of his own house or garden. Overcome by this, he at once burst out into the free and full confession—"Rabbi, *thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel!*" This gave occasion for what may be regarded as the first prophecy of our Saviour, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." Many think from this that Nathaniel had been studying under the fig-tree Jacob's vision at Bethel, of the ladder reaching unto heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending thereon; and that Christ designed to strengthen his conviction by disclosing his knowledge of this fact. But this is what we cannot know. (John i. 43—51.)

Jesus had scarcely arrived at Nazareth when he was called with his disciples to a marriage-feast at Cana, to which his mother had, it seems, already gone; we find him there on the third day after leaving Bethabara. That Joseph was not also present, has led to the notion that he was already dead; and this is more than probable, as he is not once mentioned as living, nor does he on any occasion appear throughout the period of our Lord's ministry. Cana was a small place about five miles to the north of Nazareth, and was called Cana of Galilee, to distinguish it from another



Cana in Galilee.

place of the same name. The persons then married are supposed by some to have been relations to Mary. It is shown to be probable that her sister, the wife of Cleophas, lived at Cana, and had a grown-up family in which this marriage may have taken place: and the somewhat prominent part taken by Mary in giving general orders to the attendants, has been cited in support of this conjecture. Among the Jews a wedding-feast lasted seven days; and it would seem that Christ and his disciples arrived in some of the latter days. The wine then began to run short, probably from the arrival of more guests than had been expected. The presence of Jesus, for instance, could not have been provided for, as it could not be known that he would return in time to be present, or that he would return with several persons in his company. At such feasts the guests were composed of two sorts of persons—those who came by special invitation, and those who went of their own accord, but were expected to make a present



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to the bridegroom and the bride. A lack of wine towards the end of a feast might therefore very naturally arise under the most careful provision; and that this happened at the marriage in Cana by no means implies, as usually stated, that the persons then married were in humble circumstances.

The attention of Jesus was drawn to this want of wine by his mother. The intent with which she did this has been much disputed. That she expected he would remove it by a miraculous supply is the general interpretation, and is the one which seems to agree best with all the circumstances. Jesus, however, answered, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." The *form* of this answer was, among the Jews, anything but disrespectful: but the sense implies a gentle reproof of any dictation to him in that capacity in which he was above all human control, adding that the time for this manifestation of his miraculous powers was not fully come. Gathering from this that the want would eventually be supplied in the way she expected, Mary instructed the attendants to pay exact attention to whatever instructions they might receive from him.



Marriage at Cana.

## WATER CHANGED INTO WINE.

There were on the premises six of those large stone jars or water-pots in which the Jews in those parts kept their water for use, which had been brought in smaller vessels from the well or fountain. They were preferred because they kept the water cool in summer, and it is a remarkable fact that such jars of ancient date are at this day found in the neighbourhood of Cana. These water-pots Jesus instructed the servants to fill with water; and they filled them to the very brim.

It was usual among the Jews and other ancient nations, at all their larger entertainments, to appoint one person as a master of the feast (*Architriclinus*), to preserve order and to keep up good and cheerful feeling. Among the Jews, a priest was usually chosen for this purpose, as the influence of his character enabled him the more easily to keep the festivities within the bounds of sobriety and prudence, while his acquaintance with the law afforded some security against ceremonial transgression. There was accordingly a master to this marriage-feast in Cana.

Jesus now directed the servants to fill their goblets from the jars which had been filled with water, and bear them to the governor of the feast. They did so, and he, not knowing whence the beverage came, pleasantly remarked upon the impropriety of holding back the best wine till the end of the feast. It was the custom of the Jews to give the best wine at the beginning of a feast, and afterwards, when the taste became blunted, an inferior sort—"But thou," said the master of the feast to the bridegroom—"thou hast kept the good wine until now."

This was the first miracle of Christ; and it appears to have had a particular significance, in drawing attention at the outset to the difference between the severities of John the Baptist's ministry and the benevolence of his own.

Not long after this, the approach of the Passover made it ne-

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cessary that Christ should go to Jerusalem. On his arrival, Jesus began his public ministry at Jerusalem by expelling the money-changers, and the dealers, who at that season were wont to establish themselves in a certain part of the temple's outer court.



Christ purifying the Temple.

It was not a common market; but was held for the use of those who resorted to the temple in great numbers at this feast. Such animals were there sold as were required for sacrifices—oxen, sheep, lambs, and also doves; and there were tables where the money-changers gave Jewish money for the current Roman coins, it being held unlawful to pay the temple tribute of half a shekel with heathen money. This offended Jesus, who provided himself with a scourge of small cords, and by the severity of his countenance and of his words, rather than of his action, he compelled all these traffickers to withdraw in confusion, as he exclaimed, “Take these things hence:—Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise!” . John ii. 13—17.

This action of our Lord is carefully to be distinguished from

## PURIFYING THE TEMPLE.

the similar action which he performed towards the end of his ministry, and which is the only one related by the other Evangelists. The second purification of the temple took place during the last week of our Lord's life, after the death of John the Baptist, when it could not be said, as is said here, that *afterwards* Christ dwelt and baptized in Judea.

This striking act could not fail to draw the attention of the Jews towards our Saviour. It would be granted by even the Pharisees that a divine messenger could claim a right to purify the temple in the manner of the ancient prophets, but they would require him to produce the proofs of divine mission before this right could be admitted. Therefore they gathered round him, and asked, "What sign showest thou, seeing that thou dost these things?" John ii. 18. To which he returned the answer, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." This was an allusion to his own future death through them, and to his resurrection on the third day.

The Evangelist tells us "he spoke of the temple of his body," and many suppose that he indicated this by pointing to his own body as he spoke. Whether so or not, his audience understood him of the temple in whose courts they then stood, and they replied with anger, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" The deep feeling which this saying of our Lord's produced may be seen from the fact that it formed one of the accusations against him in his trial before the high-priest. Matt. xxvi. 61.

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## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER VII.

CONVERSATION OF OUR LORD WITH NICODEMUS—JESUS BAPTIZES IN THE LAND OF JUDEA—JEALOUSY OF JOHN'S DISCIPLES—CONDUCT OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—HIS IMPRISONMENT—ITS CAUSE—JESUS PASSES THROUGH SAMARIA—ORIGIN OF THE SAMARITANS—MOUNT GERIZIM—VALLEY OF SHECHEM—JACOB'S WELL—JESUS AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.



**A**MONG the persons in Jerusalem whose attention had been drawn to Jesus, was a member of the great council called the Sanhedrim, named Nicodemus, who felt desirous of privately conversing with so remarkable a personage. As a member of that ruling body, and on account of the rank which he thence held, he was reluctant to visit Jesus openly in the day-time, and he therefore came to him in the night.

The manner in which he began the conversation seems to show that there were other members of the council as much impressed as himself with what they had seen and heard of Jesus, but who were not bold enough to come to him even by night. "Rabbi, *we* know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." This clear conviction, so heartily avowed, points out a man seeking instruction in a candid and open spirit. Jesus, therefore, sought by one word to turn the current of his thoughts from those notions respecting the temporal nature of the Messiah's kingdom which he and all other Jews entertained, and answered with more of apparent than of real abruptness, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God"

## NICODEMUS.

(that is, cannot become my disciple). Nicodemus, full of earthly notions, was unable to grasp the idea of this second birth; and after having been made to comprehend that it was of a spiritual nature, he still inquired, "How can these things be?" And then the Saviour, in a discourse full of divine instructions, and more suited to the understanding of his hearer, developed to him the holiness and final ends of his mission, so little in accordance with the notions of the Jews, who supposed the Messiah's kingdom was



Christ and Nicodemus. (Tintoretto.)

of this present world. This instruction had due effect on Nicodemus, who persevered in the faith imparted to him; but did not publicly avow his discipleship until after Christ had been crucified, when he openly joined Joseph of Arimathea in providing for the body an honourable burial. John xix. 39.

Soon after Jesus quitted Jerusalem with his disciples; but, instead of at once returning to Galilee, he remained some time in "the land of Judea" (as distinguished from Jerusalem, the metropolis), and began to baptize, through his disciples. John

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the Baptist was at the same time baptizing at Ænon, near Salim, a place near the Jordan, not far from that where Christ had been baptized by him. In general the disciples of John had more of the strict character of Judaism: they also fasted much. For this reason the Pharisees were displeased that Jesus was more followed and baptized more disciples than John, and by their representations, probably, did much to foment in John's disciples a spirit of discontent at the apparent rivalry of Jesus, and to excite a jealousy of his superior claims.

Some of John's disciples came and reported these matters to him, expecting, doubtless, that he would feel aggrieved at such proceedings of one who had received baptism from his hands. But the truly humble Baptist, who felt satisfied with his own divine calling as a harbinger, and was ever mindful of his true position, reminded them that from the first he had declared the coming of one mightier than himself, to whom now their attention should be turned.

It was not long after this that the Baptist was put in prison by Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee. The occasion was this:—

Herod Antipas had at first married the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia. On a journey to Rome he visited his brother Herod, surnamed Philip, whose wife was Herodias, daughter of another brother, Aristobulus, and consequently niece both to her husband and to Herod Antipas. With this lady the tetrarch formed a criminal attachment, and induced her to engage that, on his return, she would quit her own husband and live with him, on his undertaking to divorce the daughter of Aretas. She accordingly divorced herself from Philip, and was then married to Herod, whose own wife had retired to her father as soon as she heard of this atrocious engagement. This affair of course made a strong impression in the country. Few, however, ventured to say all

## THE SAMARITANS.

they thought of the matter. But the Baptist, with the honesty and boldness which belonged to his character, publicly condemned the conduct of the tetrarch, and plainly told him that it was not lawful for him to live with his brother's wife. For this Herod put him into prison, not, it would appear, with any view of further punishment, but to stop him from speaking in this manner to the people of a transaction which would not bear the light. Herodias herself, indeed, wished to have him put to death; but the fear of the people, who regarded John as a prophet, hindered him from yielding to her barbarous desire.

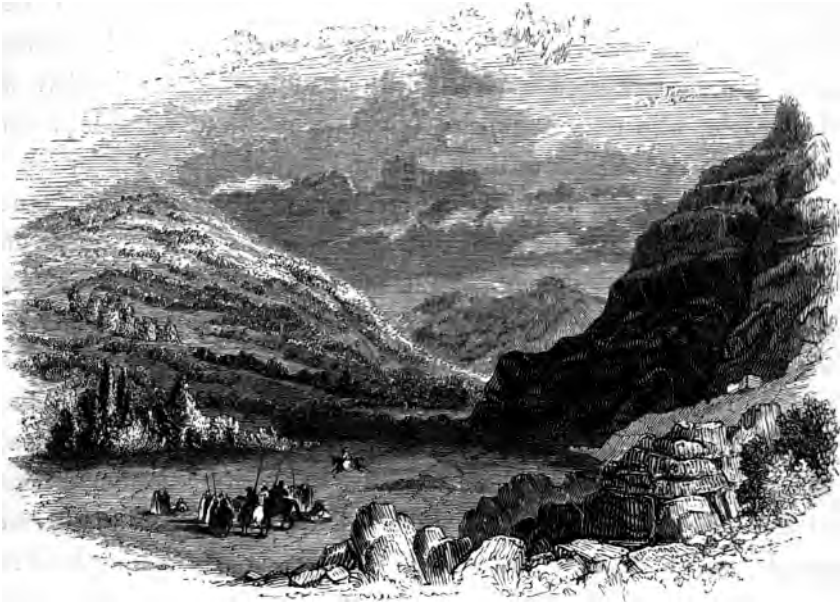
It was not until John had been cast into prison, that Jesus returned from Judea to Galilee. In doing this he must needs go through Samaria. The inhabitants of that country, the Samaritans, were descended from a mixture of Jews with the heathen colonists whom the kings of Assyria had settled in the country after the native Israelites had been removed. They had adopted the religion and manners of the Jews, but with some variation, which, with the character of their origin, rendered them odious to the Jews, who regarded them as an unclean and inferior people, and were quite as strongly disliked by the Samaritans in return. One chief ground of difference was, that the Samaritans had formed for themselves a religious establishment and temple upon Mount Gerizim, which they held to be the true seat of worship, as indicated by God himself. The Jews, on the contrary, who believed the same of their own establishment at Jerusalem, looked upon this Samaritan temple with such abhorrence, that they deemed the land in which it stood, as well as the worshippers, to be polluted; and the more strict among them, rather than travel through it in going to or returning from the festivals, were wont to cross the Jordan, and travel through the country beyond that river, without setting foot in Samaria. Those who



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travelled on foot, however, naturally preferred the direct road through Samaria, which in three days' journey brought them from Jerusalem to Galilee.

In the valley below the mountain on which their temple stood, lay the chief city of the Samaritans. It was the ancient Shechem;



Valley of Shechem, with Mounts Ebal and Gerizim.

but at this time bore among the Jews the name of Sychar, which seems in its origin to have been a by-name, imposed upon the city in contempt. On the approach to the town was a well, which being on the spot of ground which was the private property of Jacob, and which he bestowed upon his son Joseph, bore the name of Jacob's well. The well which at present passes under this name, and which is in all probability the same, is situated at the foot of Mount Gerizim, near the entrance of the valley towards Jerusalem. It is above a mile from the present town, which accounts for its

## THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

being now deserted; but it was probably nearer when the town was larger and extended farther in this direction. It bears marks of high antiquity, and is dug in the solid rock. It is thirty-five feet deep, and fifteen feet of water were found in it by Maundrell in the month of March; but it was dry in the month of June, when visited by Dr. Robinson. If this be really the well of Jacob, and if its waters then failed in summer, these facts may assist in determining the time of the year in which Christ made this journey; for there was then water in the well, although it lay deep.

Jesus in his way to Galilee reached this well about noon, and, being weary with the journey, rested here while his disciples went forward into the town to purchase victuals. By this it would seem that he intended, after rest and refreshment, to continue his journey without stopping in, or perhaps going through, the Samaritan city. From the depth at which the water lay, Jesus, although thirsty, was unable to obtain drink from it; when, therefore, a woman came from the town to draw water, he said to her, "Give me to drink." It was not usual for Jews to speak to women in public, and they avoided occasions of speaking to the Samaritan people, and of eating or drinking with them, or of using, in eating or drinking, the vessels which they employed.

Therefore, both as a woman and a Samaritan, this woman was astonished, and asked, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria?" Jesus answered, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Living water means water from a perennial spring; and we are led to conclude that Jesus here alluded to the circumstance that the well to which she had then come was *not* (as usually has been supposed) of living

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water, or at least not from an unfailing spring. The woman understood him literally, and answered accordingly; and when Jesus endeavoured to draw her attention to his deeper meaning, she still persisted in the literal understanding, by saying, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." Perceiving that she did not yet comprehend him, Our Lord changed the conversation, and, by intimating his knowledge of private circumstances of her life, which were discreditable, so wrought upon her, that she acknowledged him to be a prophet: but she hastened to change a subject so unpleasant to her, by speaking of the standing controversy between the Jews and Samaritans—the temple at Gerizim, and whether that or the one at Jerusalem "were the place where men ought to worship." Much astonished was the woman to find a topic which never failed to rouse a Jew, quietly set aside by the divine Teacher with the remark, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither at this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." This was still a deep matter for the Samaritan woman, and she answered only by referring, as was the custom of the time, to the expected Messiah, for the solution of this and all other difficult and obscure matters. "I know," she said, "that Messiah cometh; when he is come, *he* will tell us all things." Jesus answered, "I that speak unto thee am *he*!" Astonished, silenced, convinced, by this announcement, which cast a sudden and strong light upon all that she had not previously understood, the woman cared no more for her water-pot, but hastened away to the town, to make the glad tidings known to her friends and neighbours, to whom she cried, "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?"

The disciples returned from the town before this conversation



Christ and the Woman of Samaria. (A. Carracci.)



### THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

of Jesus with the woman of Samaria was quite concluded. For the reasons assigned, they were astonished to find him talking with a woman and a Samaritan; but they made no remark. They pressed him to partake of the food which they had brought; but he said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of;" and finding they understood him literally, he added, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

The intelligence of the woman brought a large number of the Samaritans from the town to the well. They pressed him to make some stay with them. This a mere Jew would have refused; but Jesus entered the town, and remained there two days, during which many of the Samaritans became believers in him as the Messiah promised to the Hebrew fathers. John iv. 1—42.

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### CHAPTER VIII.

RETURN OF JESUS INTO GALILEE—CURE OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON AT CAPERNAUM—JEWISH SYNAGOGUES—THEIR RULERS, MINISTERS AND PRIESTS—JESUS EXPOUNDS THE SCRIPTURES IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF NAZARETH—THE JEWS ARE EXASPERATED—JESUS DEPARTS TO CAPERNAUM—MOUNT OF PRECIPITATION.



WHEN Jesus pursued his journey into Galilee, where he began to preach his Gospel, to the effect of—"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye and believe the Gospel." His proceedings at Jerusalem, and the undescribed miracles which he had there wrought, drew much attention to him on his return to Galilee; and the position of a public teacher, which he now assumed, soon spread his fame throughout that region, and he was for the time well received.

On again reaching Cana of Galilee, where his first miracle had been performed, an officer in the court of Herod Antipas, whose son was at the point of death, in Capernaum, came to implore him to proceed to that place, and restore his son to health. This application shows that the unspecified miracles of Christ at Jerusalem were of the same character as those which he afterwards performed. Jesus told him to return home, and he would find his son well. Believing this, he returned, and on the way was met by messengers who had been sent to inform him that his son was recovered. Finding that the fever had left his son at the

## THE NOBLEMAN OF CAPERNAUM.

very time that Jesus had said to him, "Thy son liveth," he and his became believers in Christ.



Christ and the Nobleman of Capernaum

Jesus then proceeded to his own town of Nazareth, where he attended the synagogue on the Sabbath days.

The synagogues were buildings in every town, in which the Jews assembled for public worship, and for reading and expounding the Scriptures on the Sabbath days. In the time of Christ there was no town in Judea which had not one or more of these synagogues. Its affairs were managed by ten persons of property and influence, three of whom enjoyed a kind of superiority, and were called Rulers of the Synagogue. These persons decided differences between the members of the congregation, maintained discipline, and arranged the public worship. Each synagogue had a minister, whose duty it was to offer public prayer, and to exhort, if no one else undertook the duty. The reading of the Scriptures formed no part of his ordinary duty: but every Sabbath he called out seven of the congregation in succession to perform



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

that service. He of course called forth only such as he knew or supposed capable of reading correctly. If a priest were present, he was first called, then a Levite, afterwards any persons on whom the minister might fix. The person called upon went to the desk or raised platform in the middle of the synagogue, and unrolled the volume till he came to the section he was to read; he read standing, and when he had finished, was at liberty to add any words of exhortation which he desired. This explains the proceeding of our Saviour in the synagogue at Nazareth. His re-appearance there was regarded with great interest by the congregation; and when "he stood up to read," the section for the day was a passage in Isaiah, which prophetically referred to himself. Isa. lxi. 1, 2. When he had read this, and returned the roll to the minister, he sat down, which was the posture in which the Jewish teachers addressed their audience. This, therefore, being a signal that he intended to speak, every one present watched with eager attention the words that fell from their townsman, whose fame was now so widely spread. The Scripture referred to the deeds of the Messiah, which were such as Jesus had actually performed in other places. When, therefore, he began by saying, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears;" they were charmed with his words, expecting to see the same beneficial acts performed among themselves. This was not his intention; and he proceeded to explain why this could not be. They looked upon him as the son of Joseph the carpenter, the relative of persons well known to them, and were little disposed to recognise in such a one, whom they had seen daily in their streets, the illustrious personage of whom the prophets had spoken. Therefore, because they despised him, because they would not see him in the character which he claimed—because in this, as in every other instance, "a prophet hath no honour in his

### MOUNT OF PRECIPITATION.

own country," he would work no miracles among them, but would confer his benefits on others, of whatsoever country, who were desirous of his doctrine, and who were willing to receive his instructions.

Nothing was ever more likely to exasperate the Jews than an implied or expressed preference of others. In this case the exasperation ran so high, that the congregation rose upon Jesus, and hurried him outside the city, to the brow of the hill on which it stood, with the intention of casting him down headlong: but he escaped from them, whether by miracle or not has been disputed, and proceeded to Capernaum.

There are several perpendicular precipices, forty or fifty feet high, in the hills and around the present village; and one of these



Mount of Precipitation, near Nazareth.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

is doubtless that from which it was intended to cast Jesus down. That which is now known as the Mount of Precipitation is, however, nearly two miles south-east from the village. It is by no means likely that the excited mob would take their intended victim so far; and we may hence conclude that this precipice is pointed out merely because it makes a more striking object as seen from the plain of Esdraelon. Indeed, the absurdity is so great, that the monks in Nazareth feel the necessity of stating that the city stood nearer to this precipice formerly than it does at present; but this assertion is against probability and unsupported by any kind of proof.

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## CAPERNAUM.

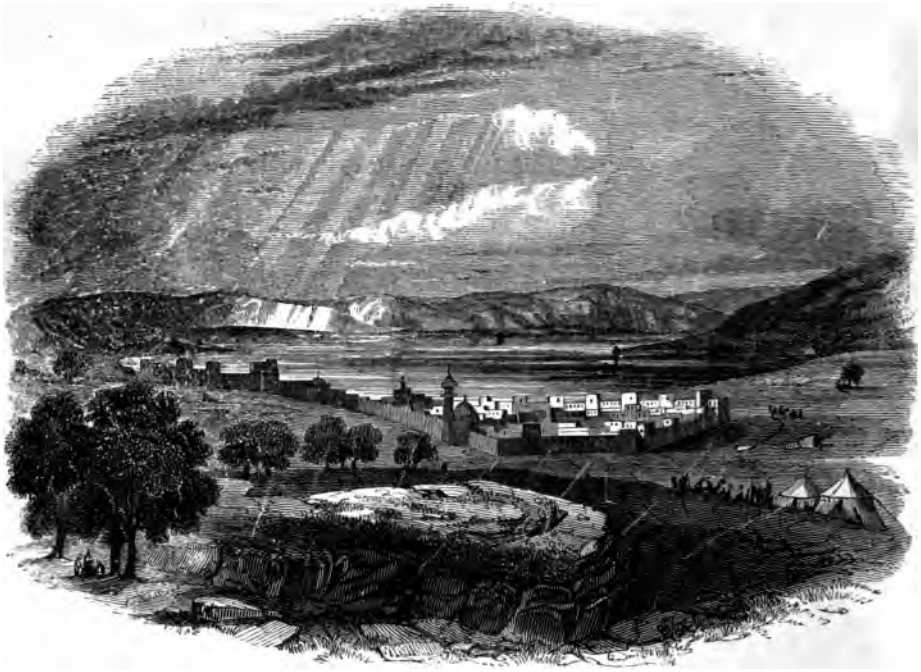
### CHAPTER IX.

**SITUATION OF CAPERNAUM—THE LAKE OF TIBERIAS—MIRACLE OF THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES—  
JESUS TEACHES IN THE SYNAGOGUE—HEALS A MAN WITH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT—CROWDS OF  
DISEASED PERSONS ARE BROUGHT TO CHRIST—HE HEALS THEM ALL—NATURE OF LEPROSY—  
LAWS RELATING TO LEPERS—DIVINE COMPASSION OF JESUS TOWARDS LEPERS—CURE OF THE  
SICK OF THE PALSY—CONSTRUCTION OF EASTERN HOUSES.**



N Capernaum, to which our Lord now proceeded, he henceforth usually resided when in Galilee. Often as this place is mentioned in the New Testament, its local situation is only known by the intimation that it lay upon the coast of the Sea of Tiberias, upon the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim (Matt. iv.

13). It must therefore have lain on the western shore of the lake, and some incidental notices in the Gospels enable us to collect that it lay in that part of the western shore known as the region of Gennesareth, which was a fertile plain down upon the shore, below the mountains which on that side form the basin of the lake. This small plain occurs in about the mid-distance between the town of Tiberias and the northern extremity of the lake, and is contained within a triangular expansion of the shore from the backward bending of the mountains. Capernaum was evidently a place of some importance in the time of Christ; but all trace of it has long since disappeared, and the very site which it occupied has become uncertain. In this we may find a striking fulfilment of our Lord's denunciation: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell:



Lake and Town of Tiberias.

for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." Matt. xi. 23.

The brothers Peter and Andrew, and the brothers John and James, who had acknowledged the divine mission of Christ, were fishermen of the Lake of Tiberias, and as they had not been called to a constant attendance upon the person of Jesus, they had returned to the occupation by which they earned their livelihood. They were partners together in the same concern; that is to say, they went out fishing together in their respective fishing-smacks, and shared together the produce of their toil.

The prophet of Nazareth failed not to attract attention when he came to Capernaum; he was followed by crowds of persons, who wished to hear his teaching. One day, as he walked along

### MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

the shore of the lake, he was thus attended, and, being pressed upon by the crowd, he went into Peter's fishing-boat, which happened to be on the shore, and desired him to thrust the vessel out somewhat from the brink, that he might the more conveniently address the people, when he was thus separated from them and raised above them.

When he had finished, he turned to the friendly fishermen, and said, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Peter, as an experienced fisherman, slightly demurred at this. "Master," he said, "we have toiled all the night, and taken nothing." If, therefore, they had taken nothing during the night (the proper time for fishing), it seemed hopeless to cast the net in the day-time, in the sight of the fish, and in comparatively shallow water. But although this was well known to Peter, it did not prevent him from adding—"Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." And richly was this faith rewarded. The men who had toiled all the night and caught nothing, now enclosed so many fish that their net began to break,



Miraculous Draught of Fishes. (Rubens.)

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

and they had to summon their partners in the other boat to their assistance.

Peter's previous hesitation makes us the better appreciate the amazement with which he was filled by this event. A landsman might not so readily have apprehended the full force of all the bearings of this miracle; and Peter himself had been less astonished to see Christ heal the sick—perhaps from a notion, common among the Jews, that the prayers of holy men accompanied by imposition of hands might have power to heal diseases and to cast out evil spirits. But here was a miracle more distinctly addressed to his own perceptions, and which assured him that Jesus of Nazareth held dominion even over the sea and its inhabitants. He could not but conceive that there was some peculiar presence of God with a person who could perform a miracle like this; and the consciousness of sin made him fear to appear in the presence of such a one, lest some infirmity or offence should expose him to more than ordinary punishments. When, therefore, he perceived that the fish which had been taken at this draught, filled both the boats to that degree that they began to sink, he fell down at the feet of Jesus, crying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." But the Lord encouraged him and Andrew, whose sentiments he expressed, by saying, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of MEN." They understood this "Come after me," or "Follow me," as a summons to exclusive attendance upon him thenceforth, and, accordingly, they had no sooner landed than they abandoned all their fishing concerns and followed him. John and James appear to have hastened to the shore with their fish and nets in the other vessel, and had not heard this call, though they shared in the feelings which produced it. When, however, Christ had landed with Peter and Andrew, and proceeded a little way along the shore, he beheld them busily

## TEACHING IN THE SYNAGOGUES.

engaged with their father Zebedee in mending the broken nets. He called to them, "Follow me," and they immediately arose and followed him, leaving their father in the boat with the hired servants. Compare Luke v. 1—10; Matt. iv. 18—22; Mark i. 16—20.

During his residence at Capernaum, Jesus followed his usual practice, and taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. It may be remarked that he was not now in his native place, where he might be supposed to have had more facilities in this respect, according to the rules of the synagogues. But the fact is, that the Jews in their synagogues were always desirous of hearing any stranger who had taken the character of a public teacher, or who seemed to have any wish to address them, and hence, when such persons happened to be present, they were usually called upon by the minister of the synagogue. We see an instance of this in Acts xiii. 15. Thus it was that at Capernaum and other places, Jesus found frequent opportunities of "teaching in the synagogues."

When Christ taught in the synagogue at Capernaum, the people were astonished at his doctrine, "for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes." By this we understand, that he taught not as a commentator on the law of Moses, and on the traditions of the fathers; but as a prophet greater than Moses, come with a new law and a new doctrine, and not bound by the literal obligations of a covenant completed and finished by his own appearance upon the earth. Well might they, who regarded the law and the traditions as the eternal counsel of God, be "astonished" at the new doctrine which Jesus taught.

Among those present, as he taught in the synagogue at Capernaum, was "a man with an unclean spirit." He also was wrought



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

upon by that which he heard, and he cried out in the name of the demons who tormented him, or the demons cried through him in their own name (for the matter is disputed), "Let us alone: what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee, who thou art: the Holy One of God." But Jesus now and on other occasions declined to avail himself of such testimony, and rather endeavoured to suppress it; so now he said, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him." But although forbidden to speak, piercing cries attested the agony of the man, under the strong convulsions by which he was rent as the evil spirit departed from him. The people were astonished beyond measure at this transaction. With such cases of demoniacal possession they were indeed well acquainted, and the process of cure followed by the Jewish exorcists was known to them. It was "the *authority* with which he spake"—it was "the new doctrine," that confounded them. The Jewish exorcists used invocations in the Divine name to dislodge the demons; but no one had ever done this thing in his own name until now. It requires larger considerations than this place admits, to show, from the peculiar notions entertained by the Jewish people, how strikingly calculated this act of Jesus was to arrest attention and excite astonishment. But those who are already acquainted with those notions, feel no surprise in learning that "immediately his fame spread abroad through all the region round about Galilee." Mark i. 21—28.

Christ appears to have lodged in the house of Peter during his stay at Capernaum; at least he proceeded thither on leaving the synagogue. The marvellous cure just performed caused some one to mention that Peter's mother-in-law was in the house, lying dangerously ill of a fever. On hearing this, Jesus went to her, and as he took her by the hand to lift her up, the

## MIRACLES OF HEALING.

fever departed from her, and she arose from her bed and attended upon him.

The fame of these miracles of healing spread rapidly through the city, and excited new remembrances of lost strength, and new hopes of health in all the incurables of the place. How impatiently they waited till the setting of the sun ended the Sabbath, and enabled their friends to take them to the prophet, by whose hands such deeds of mercy had been wrought! In the evening, therefore, crowds of diseased persons were assembled before the door of Peter's house. Jesus came forth to them, healed them by his word, and sent them rejoicing home. Then, as the Evangelist remarks, was fulfilled that saying of the prophet Isaiah—"Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." Matt. viii. 14—17; Mark i. 31—34.

The next morning, Jesus rose "a great while before day," and withdrew privately to a solitary place, that he might indulge in prayer and meditation undisturbed by the crowds which now attended his steps. Peter and his companions soon came to him there, and apprised him of the multitudes which sought for him, and awaited his appearance at Capernaum. This decided him not to return thither. The fact of the attention which had been drawn to him, sufficed to show that he had already borne sufficient testimony to the new doctrine in that city, and that it now behoved him to declare the will of God, and bear similar testimony in other places also. He therefore said: "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth."

The renown of his preaching and miracles had by this time spread throughout Syria, and multitudes followed him, or gathered around him wherever he went. Many persons came from the remotest parts of the land to hear and see him—even

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

from Jerusalem and Judea, and from the country beyond the Jordan. Those who know what throngs of diseased persons, at this day, in the East, gather around any stranger who is supposed or rumoured to possess medicines, or to be gifted with unusual powers of healing, and with what urgent importunities and cries they appeal to him for relief, may form some notion of the crowds of diseased persons who would and did gather to one whose word, whose touch, whose look, had power to drive away every kind of sickness and disease. Then, and constantly during our Lord's sojourning upon earth, were accomplished the prophecies which our poet has so beautifully embodied :—

“ The Saviour comes ! by ancient bards foretold :  
Hear him, ye deaf ; and all ye blind behold !  
He from thick films shall clear the visual ray,  
And on the sightless eye-ball pour the day.  
’Tis he the obstructed paths of sound shall clear,  
And bid new music charm the unfolding ear ;  
The dumb shall sing, the lame his crutch forego,  
And leap exulting like the bounding roe.”

Of all the miraculous cures which were effected during this journey, only one has been selected by the Evangelists for particular notice : this was the cure of a leper.

Leprosy was a disease of the skin to which the ancient nations appear to have been much subject, and which was so common even in Europe during the middle ages, that numerous hospitals, or rather “lazar-houses,” were established for lepers. The disease usually imparted an unearthly paleness to the complexion, whence, when Gehazi was punished with the leprosy of which Naaman had been cured, he is said to have gone forth from his master's presence “a leper as white as snow.” 2 Kings v. 27. The disease was deemed incurable by medicine ; it was certainly contagious, and was even believed to be hereditary. Lepers

## LEPROSY.

were hence compelled to live in a state of separation outside the towns by the laws of Moses, Lev. xiii. 46; and so rigidly was this law enforced, without respect of persons, that the sister of Moses and Aaron, when smitten with leprosy, was put out of the camp, Num. xii. 15; and King Uzziah, when visited with a similar affliction, was compelled to relinquish the government, and live secluded in a separate house, 2 Kings xv. 5.

The dread of this disease was so great, that still further precautions were judged necessary to prevent infection. Lepers were compelled to wear their dress in such a manner as to distinguish them even at a distance. The outer garment was rent open in front, the head bare, and the lip was to be covered either with the hand or with the skirt of the garment. Nor was this all, for it was the bounden duty of the leper, by cries of "Unclean! Unclean!" to give warning of his presence to those who might happen to be near him. These latter precautions were found so effectual, that although lepers resided outside the towns, they were allowed to enter them in the day-time and to appear in the streets and public places.

As this state of the leper was one into which no one would willingly enter, it may easily be supposed that persons were not brought into it without examination. The fact is, that when a person was suspected of being afflicted with leprosy, it became the interest of all his friends and neighbours to have the fact determined, as they might all be subjected to unpleasant consequences by continued intercourse with him. He was, therefore, taken before the priest, whose business it was to be qualified, under certain rules laid down by the law, to distinguish true leprosy from any disease which might appear like it; and if it were a real leprosy, the priest pronounced the man unclean, and he went into separation. And from this condition no one could

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

be relieved but by the same sanction. If a leper believed himself healed, he was to go before the priest, who examined him, and passed judgment upon his condition. If he seemed to be cured, he then underwent the ceremonies of purification, which are minutely described in Levit. xiii. These chiefly consisted in the slaughter of one of two birds, and the sprinkling of the person with its blood after the body had been burned. The other bird was set free, either to signify that the leprosy had departed, or, to indicate the man's restoration to the free intercourse of society



Christ cureth the Leper.

and life. This restoration did not, however, take place all at once. The man remained apart both from lepers and from clean persons for a week after the purification; and he then again presented himself before the priest, when, if no symptom of leprosy had re-appeared, he presented a sacrifice, and all restraint was withdrawn from him.

Under these circumstances we can suppose how fervently a leper would desire to be relieved from his miserable condition,

## RESTORATION OF A LEPER.

and considering the usually incurable nature of the disease, we can the better appreciate the strength of faith shown by the leper who fell down before Christ, and besought him, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean!" The Saviour of men was touched with compassion. He put forth his hand and touched him, saying, "I will: be thou clean;" and immediately the man's leprosy departed from him. Jesus then charged him not to declare the manner of his cure, but to go and show himself to the priest in the usual course. This was indeed necessary to restore the man to his civil privileges; but in this case it had also the effect of rendering the inspection of the priest instrumental in authenticating the miracle. The man, however, was unable to control the expression of his wonder and gratitude. He published the matter wherever he went, and such was the effect, that Christ was unable to enter any town openly, on account of the crowds which beset his path.

Jesus returned to Capernaum, where diseased persons continued to be brought to him, and large numbers of people from different parts of the country attended his instructions. He was once teaching in a house so crowded with auditors, even to the door, that all means of access were cut off. Here a man entirely laid up with palsy was brought to be cured by Jesus; and when his bearers found that they could not in any other way bring him before Christ, they took him to the top of the house, and slung him down through the tiling, in his bed, to the feet of Jesus. This transaction appears somewhat difficult, owing to the great difference between the construction of Eastern houses and of our own. A little explanation will make it clear. The houses have flat roofs, protected by a rail or parapet, and forming a fine terrace, to which the people resort for air and exercise, and where they sleep during the nights of summer. There is usually a flight of steps

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.



Christ cureth the Sick of the Palsy.

near the door, and another in the interior part of the house communicating with the roof. If the bearers of the palsied man could not get access to the door, they doubtless carried him to the roof of a neighbouring house, and then passed him over the separating parapet to the roof of that house in which Christ was.

The buildings of an Eastern house form one or more sides of an interior court or quadrangle. The ground floor is usually occupied by offices; the first floor is fronted by a covered gallery, into which all the principal apartments of the house open. If there be a second story, there is a similar gallery to it. Now the nature of the operation performed by the persons in charge of the paralytic depends entirely upon the position which Christ at that time occupied. He was not in the court preaching to the people there; because in that case it would not have been needful to remove any tiling in order to let the sick man down to him. Neither was he in a room, as is usually interpreted, for that would

## THE SICK OF THE PALSY.

have necessitated the removal or opening of the roof; and this, from the materials of which the roofs are composed, and from the manner of their construction, would not only have been a work of much time and labour, but would have filled the room below with dust and rubbish. It only, therefore, remains to conclude that Christ was in the gallery, surrounded by the principal persons and by his own disciples, and thence addressed the people assembled in the court below. This was not only the position likely to be taken by any person desirous of being heard by the largest number of persons, but the one which best agrees with all the circumstances of the case. The bearers of the paralytic man had, then, only to remove the covering or pent-house of the gallery, which is usually formed of shingles or other materials easily removed, and to let the sick man down before Jesus, who sat there.

The faith implied in the trouble taken and the means employed in gaining access to his presence, was that which first and most strongly engaged our Lord's attention when this poor creature was lowered down to his feet. Therefore he bestowed upon him a greater boon than he came to seek, in the words, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee!" This saying utterly confounded all the learned persons—the Scribes and Pharisees—who happened to be present. They knew that, although a man honoured by the Almighty might work marvels, as the prophets of old had done, the forgiveness of sin belonged to God only; and hence they sought among themselves, "Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Although they did not speak this out, but only thought it, Christ perceived their feeling in this matter, and turning to them, asked, "What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk?'" And then, using his power to



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

say the latter as an argument of his right to say the former, he added:—"But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (and here he turned to the palsied man) "I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house!" And immediately the man felt his miserable limbs loosened from their long bondage, he felt them gather strength and substance, he felt them roused to vital action; and he sprung upon his feet, he took up the couch on which he had the moment before lain helpless and impotent, and he hastened therewith to his own house glorifying God. The astonished crowd also dispersed; and men said to one another, "We have seen strange things to-day!"

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## PUBLICANS.

### CHAPTER X.

CHARACTER AND OCCUPATION OF THE PUBLICANS—MATTHEW THE PUBLICAN IS CALLED TO FOLLOW CHRIST—HE MAKES A GREAT FEAST ON THE OCCASION—JESUS RETURNS TO JERUSALEM—THE POOL OF BETHESDA—CURE OF THE IMPOTENT MAN—JEWISH OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH—OUR LORD'S MIRACLES FREQUENTLY PERFORMED ON THAT DAY.



IF there existed any people whom the Jews detested more than even the Samaritans, more than even the very Heathen, it was the Publicans. This constantly appears in the Gospels, where the proud Pharisees make it a frequent matter of reproach to Christ that he associated with "Publicans and Sinners." The Publicans were tax-gatherers—a body of men not much liked in any country, but absolutely loathed in Palestine. This requires some explanation.

The government taxes under the Romans were usually farmed by persons of family and consideration, and although they were called Publicans by the Romans, they are not to be confounded with the Publicans of the New Testament. Even this office, however, had declined from its ancient reputation, as the farmers of the revenue began to let it appear that they cared more for their own profits than for the revenues of the state, or for the well-being of the people. These persons employed large numbers of collectors, who were mostly natives of the country in which

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

the taxes were gathered. These were also called Publicans, and were in general discredit,—first, for their dishonesty in endeavouring to make a purse for themselves by unjust charges upon their own countrymen, and also on account of their connection with and dependence upon the conquering people. In a conquered nation we always find those persons odious who enter into the service of the conquerors, and much more when the service in which they engage is one which would be odious under any circumstances. Now, if this were the case generally, we may judge with what intensity these feelings would operate among such a people as the Jews, who abhorred the Roman yoke, who regarded as almost impious the payment of tribute to the heathen, and who deemed any intercourse with them, as amounting to an absolute defilement. Owing to this state of things, the office of tax-gatherer naturally fell into the hands of low and unprincipled persons, whose conduct in some degree justified the odium in which the employment was held. This was so strong that the Publicans formed, as it were, a caste by themselves, with whom few would sit down to meat, and into whose houses few would enter. No doubt there were some exceptions to the character thus given to them ; no doubt there were among them respectable and fair-dealing men : but this was their general character ; and there were probably fewer persons who thought well of the publicans, than there were publicans who deserved to be well thought of.

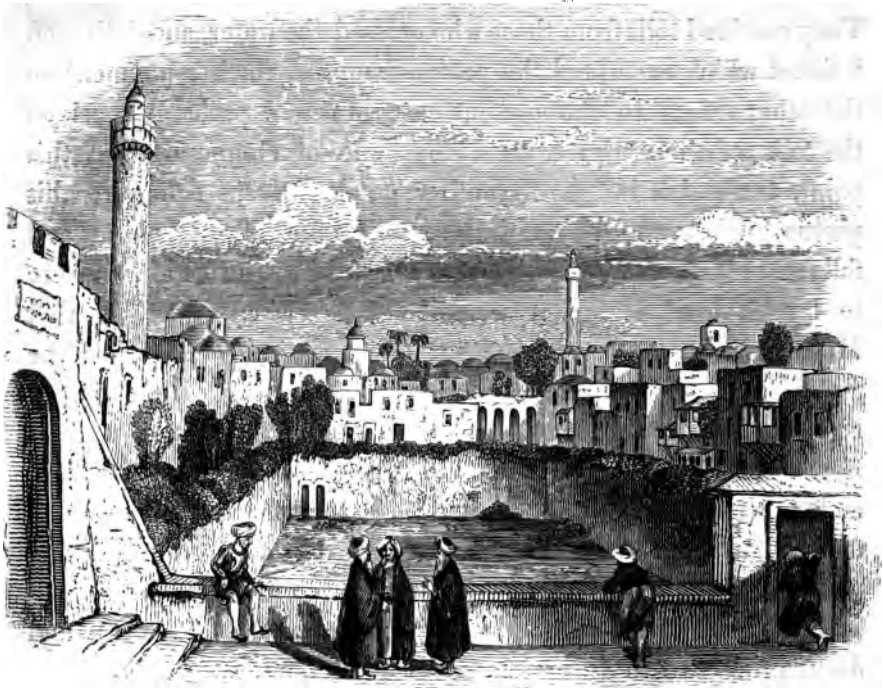
One day when Jesus went forth from the town of Capernaum to the border of the lake, attended by a crowd as usual, he observed a Publican named Matthew “sitting at the receipt of custom.” Some think that he sat in the maritime gate of the town ; but it appears that the Publicans had booths or toll-houses at the foot of bridges, at the mouth of rivers, and by the sea-shore.

## THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

They received tolls from those who crossed the water, and delivered a ticket which exempted the person from any further payment on the other side. In the present case Matthew probably received the tolls of those who crossed the Lake of Gennesareth at this point, trafficking in fish and other goods. Jesus called to this person, "Follow me;" and immediately "he left all, rose up and followed him." This readiness to follow him who had not where to lay his head, is the more praiseworthy when we reflect that Matthew was a man of some substance, as indeed most of the Publicans were, even the fair gains of the occupation being very considerable. That Matthew was such, appears from the great feast which he gave to Jesus and his disciples that same evening, and at which so many Publicans were present as gave occasion for the first murmur against our Lord as one who kept company with Publicans and Sinners.

The time of the Passover again came round (32 A.D.), and Jesus proceeded to Jerusalem with his disciples.

The gate by which sheep, especially those destined for the service of the temple, were brought into the city, was called the Sheep-gate. Not far from this gate was a bath or pool, called the Pool of Bethesda. This pool possessed some healing property in its waters, which occasioned it to be the resort of diseased persons, for whose accommodation the place was provided with five porches. The account given of this bath by the Evangelist is:—"An angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." There are difficulties in this, which are perhaps best met by the explanation of our judicious Doddridge, who supposes that the water had at all times more or less of a medicinal property: but at some period, not far distant from that in which the transac-



The Pool of Bethesda.

tions here recorded took place, it was endued with a miraculous power, an extraordinary commotion being probably observed in the water, and Providence so ordering it, that the next person who accidentally bathed there, being under some great disorder, found an immediate and unexpected cure; the like phenomenon in some other desperate case was probably observed on a second commotion; and these commotions and cures might happen periodically.

In the porches of the bath at this time lay a large number of diseased persons, the blind, the halt, the withered, waiting the opportunity of going into the water as soon as the commotion should be observed. As our Lord passed this way his attention

## THE PARALYTIC CURED.

was directed to a man who had been in a helpless condition for thirty-eight years. To him Christ put the thrilling question—"Wilt thou be made whole?" But the man, not apprehending the full drift of the question, replied by explaining that hitherto he had been unable to step into the water at the time of cure; for others, when the commotion was observed, went in before him and reaped the benefit. Then Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk!" And he was instantly obeyed; the man arose perfectly whole, and departed to his home bearing the bed on which he had a moment before lain in cureless paralysis.

It happened to be the Sabbath-day, on which it was deemed unlawful to carry any burden. The man was reminded of this by the persons whom he passed with his burden. He pleaded the order of the person who had made him whole, but who was unknown to him. He afterwards, however, saw Christ, and was spoken to by him in the temple, and then he went and reported who it was that had made him whole.

Now the man probably did this with good intentions, but it furnished the Jews with a ground of reproach against him, not as one who had directed another to break the Sabbath, but as one who had broken it himself by performing this cure on the Sabbath-day. It was only in cases of urgent and extreme necessity that the sick received the usual attention on the Sabbath-day, the rule being not to do anything for them which could be postponed to the next day without danger; and, therefore, in this case, they would argue that seeing the man had lain so long in this state, the act of cure should have been delayed till the next day, and not performed on the Sabbath. We are not to suppose that Christ had any intention to slight the Sabbath. The notions to which his practice was opposed were not sanctioned by the law of Moses, but were the preposterous refinements of a later age. But even

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

if they had been required by the Law of Moses, Jesus came with a greater law of his own, and was "Lord even of the Sabbath day."

It is remarkable how many circumstances are reported by the Evangelists to have taken place on the Sabbath-day. From this it would appear, either that our Lord purposely wrought his more signal miracles on that day, or that the Evangelists selected these on account of the discussions to which they gave rise. The latter seems the more probable conclusion. The next case on which this discussion was raised was, however, an incident involving no display of divine power.

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## THE PHARISEES AND THE SABBATH.

### CHAPTER XI.

THE JEWS ACCUSE OUR LORD OF BREAKING THE SABBATH—HIS REPLY—CURE OF THE MAN WITH THE WITHERED HAND—THE PHARISEES WITH THE HERODIANS SEEK TO DESTROY JESUS—HE RETURNS TO CAPERNAUM—PASSES WHOLE NIGHTS IN PRAYER—CHOOSES HIS TWELVE APOSTLES.



IN the Sabbath-day following that on which the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda was cured, Christ and his disciples were passing through the corn-fields, when some of the latter, being hungry, plucked some of the ears, and ate the grain after rubbing it out between their hands. Some Pharisees who were present seized hold of this incident, and asked, "Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath-day?" The reader conversant with the Law of Moses will marvel at this question, for there is certainly no law in the Books of Moses forbidding eating on the Sabbath-day, or forbidding the plucking of the ears of corn, or rubbing them in the hands. It arose from one of those absurd refinements upon the law to which the Jews of that age were prone. The act of the disciples they would consider as forbidden by the law, *Exod. xx. 10*: "Thou shalt do *no manner of work* on the Sabbath-day." Now plucking the corn they regarded as a manner of work, a sort of reaping or plucking up corn—which is a mode in which it was gathered among them; nor was this all, for the rubbing with the hands they held to be also a manner of work, of the same nature and equivalent to the threshing of corn.



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

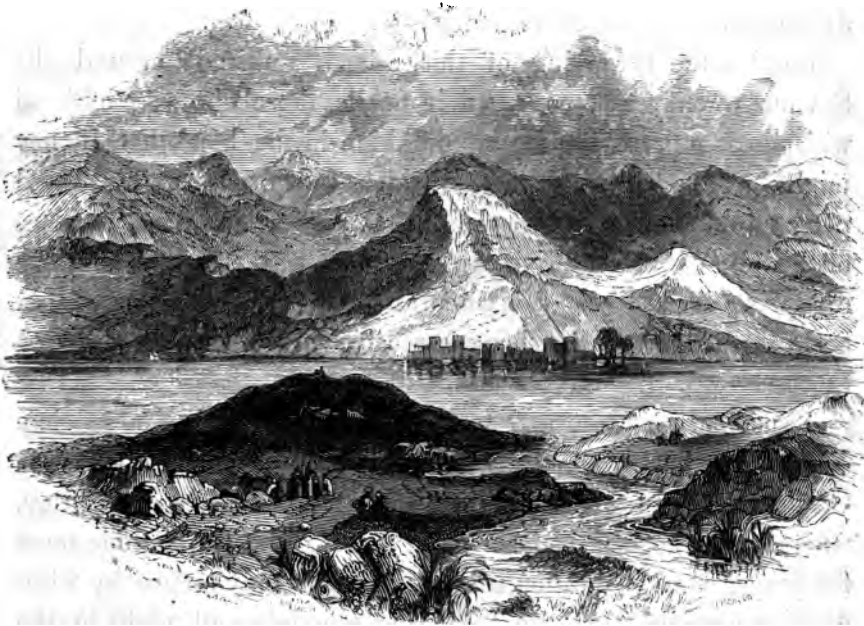
The remark made to the disciples was answered by Jesus himself, with one of his usual arguments, namely, that even assuming that such acts were contrary to the law, *he* had a power above the law, and was not bound by the restrictions which it imposed. In this case he alluded to the case of David, who, without blame, ate, when hungry, of the shew-bread, which it was most decidedly unlawful for any but the priests to eat. He also pointed out that, according to their view, the very priests, in the sacrifices connected with their office, constantly profaned the Sabbath-day, and yet were blameless. If they enjoyed such exemption, how much more he, who was greater than even the temple by which their priestly acts were consecrated. In conclusion Jesus added :—“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.” All this is more precisely levelled at particular Jewish notions than we can find room to explain. But it must be understood that the last expression was a distinct claim to be regarded as the Messiah; for it was believed by the Jews themselves that the Messiah was Lord of the Sabbath, and that in his day all that was burdensome in its observance should be removed. Luke vi. 1—3; Mark ii. 26—28; Matt. xii. 4—7.

The same day, apparently, our Lord attended at one of the Synagogues in Jerusalem. There was conspicuously present a man whose hand was withered, and the Pharisees present, now fully alive to his views, watched him closely, in order that they might, if possible, find some ground of accusation against him in the Sanhedrim. Perceiving this, Jesus told the man to stand forward; on which the Pharisees, unable to contain themselves, asked, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day?” This seems an absurd question, and such it was; but we have already explained the view on which it was founded. Christ answered by referring

## THE HERODIANS.

to a case which the law itself declared to be legal, Exod. xxiii. 4, 5 ; Deut. xxii. 4 :—"What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out?—how much then is a man better than a sheep!" They could not answer this; and Jesus, after looking around upon them with righteous indignation, bade the man stretch forth his shrunk-up hand. That hand, powerless so long, immediately obeyed his will; he stretched it forth sound and perfect as the other.

On this the Pharisees left the place in high exasperation; this act having been the first which was performed contrary to and in defiance of their previous remonstrances. They then first began to consult with the Herodians how they might destroy him.



The Jordan leaving the Lake of Tiberias.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

These Herodians seem to have been a political party, anxious to secure for Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, the regal titles and powers which had been enjoyed by Herod the Great, and who, therefore, had just the same grounds for resisting the claim of Jesus to be regarded as the Messiah, which had at a former time induced the elder Herod to seek the destruction of the heaven-born "King of the Jews."

The time for Jesus to suffer death had, however, not yet come; his mission on earth was not yet accomplished; and therefore he left Judea, attended by his disciples, and returned to the borders of the Lake of Gennesareth. In this journey he was followed by crowds of people, anxious to hear him and to see his mighty works—not only from Jerusalem and Judea, and from the remote parts of Galilee, but from Idumæa, the region beyond the river Jordan, and even from Phœnicia.

Besides the thronging of this mixed multitude around the Saviour whenever he appeared in public, those who were afflicted with diseases pressed close around him, in the hope that, if they might but touch him, the virtue which transpired from his sacred person would suffice to accomplish their cure. The inconvenience of this became at length so urgent, that it was arranged with the disciples, who had been fishermen at this place, that a boat should be in attendance on the shore to receive him when incommoded by the crowd.

Jesus had now returned to Capernaum, which has more than once been indicated as his usual place of residence when in Galilee. The crowds by which he was followed from day to day, wherever he appeared, made more dear to him the solitude meet for prayer and meditation, which he could only secure by withdrawing secretly from the town, and remaining all night in the neighbouring mountains and wildernesses. Often in those days—

## THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

“Cold mountains and the midnight air  
Witness'd the fervour of his prayer.”

We are told of one night in which he thus withdrew to a mountain, and “continued all night in prayer to God.” This was preparatory to the nomination of the twelve apostles; and if He who was “without sin” found it desirable to precede a measure of this importance with earnest prayer, how much more should we, who are compassed about with infirmity on every side, imitate the example here set before us.

The selection of twelve from among his more constant followers, to be always with him, and to act in his name, was dictated by many important considerations; the chief of which seems to have been that they, being ever about him, hearing all he said and seeing all he did, might, after his decease, become competent witnesses of his whole course of life and action; and be so well instructed in the things of God, as to carry on the work which it was his commission only to commence. The persons chosen included the six who had been already called to follow Christ, namely, the brothers Peter and Andrew; the brothers John and James; Philip, and Matthew: and six whose names have not before occurred—Bartholomew (supposed to be the same with Nathaniel); James and Jude, sons of Alphæus and first cousins of Christ, on which account they are sometimes called his “brethren.” Their mother appears to have been a sister of the Virgin Mary. The others were Thomas, surnamed Didymus, or the “twin;” Simon, surnamed Zelotes; and Judas, surnamed Iscariot.

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## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER XII.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT—CHARACTER OF THIS DIVINE DISCOURSE—LOCALITY OF THE MOUNT—JESUS RETURNS TO CAPERNAUM—HEALS THE CENTURION'S SERVANT—JESUS APPROACHES NAIN—RESTORES THE WIDOW'S SON TO LIFE—EFFECT OF THIS MIRACLE.



The Sermon on the Mount.



**G**REAT multitude, composed as usual, and brought together by the usual motives, had by this time gathered to Jesus in the open country. Perceiving this, he ascended an eminence, and there delivered the famous Sermon on the Mount.

That which is supposed to be the mount from which this sermon was delivered, is now called by Christians the Mount of Beatitudes. There is nothing to allege against its being actually the mount in question ;

## THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

but there is as little to urge for it. The Evangelists specify no particular mountain, and there are near the lake perhaps a dozen other mountains which would answer just as well to the circumstances of the history.

But the Sermon itself:—who can speak of these Divine words according to their claims upon our admiration and respect? How different from all that the philosophers and poets of the heathen taught!—and how different even from the teaching of the ancient Hebrew prophets!—and above all, how different in spirit and essential matter from the mean talk and petty questions with which the great Jewish doctors of that age amused their disciples! No wonder that this new style of teaching attracted such multitudes to hear Jesus; and drew from them, on more than one occasion, the acknowledgment that never man spake like him.

The scope of this discourse is to correct the false notions which the Jews entertained concerning the Messiah's kingdom, and to teach what kind of happiness was to be expected from it, and to describe the dispositions which were necessary to its attainment. Of the multitude which Jesus addressed, a great part were men of mean station and humble circumstances, held in contempt by the rulers, the priests, and the Pharisees. Many of them, perhaps all of them, expected from the Messiah—and, in acknowledging Christ to be the Messiah, expected from him—at least the blessings promised by Moses, affluence, prosperity, and whatever is thought to promote worldly well-being. Our Lord therefore teaches them what was to be expected and aimed at by those who should submit themselves to his direction. In order, too, that he might render his hearers the more attentive, and that they might the better remember his utterances, he, conformably to Eastern custom, propounds his doctrine by certain paradoxes,

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

which seem at first sight contradictory, but on examination turn out to be true. In this discourse also he advances in a very marked manner his claim to be considered as a Legislator, not only equal to Moses, but superior to him. The Jews allowed that the Messiah would be greater than Moses, and, therefore, in advancing this claim Jesus declares himself the Messiah, and was so understood.\* It is often supposed that Christ here comes forward to explain what the Law of Moses really meant—thus making himself in fact a commentator on that law: but it may rather appear that he refers to the Law of Moses in order to illustrate by particular examples the superiority of the new doctrine which he came to teach—of the new law which he came to promulgate. So when



"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."  
*Sermon on the Mount.—Matt. vii. 19.*

He says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' but *I* say unto you that ye resist not evil," he surely does not mean to develop any inner meaning of the old law which he cites, but to produce a new and better law of his own.

## THE CENTURION.

It seems very certain that, in delivering this discourse, Jesus had in view the city of Saphet, which is seated upon the summit of a tall and very steep mountain, where it seems perched high in air, and scarcely accessible to mortal foot. In fact this mountain and city must have been visible from almost any point of the locality in which the Sermon was delivered. This fact gives much force to some of the allusions in the Sermon, as, "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid" Matt. v. 14; and above all to the magnificent conclusion of the discourse:—"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it" Matt. vii. 24—27.

Jesus then returned to Capernaum, where an incident awaited him different in character from any which had yet occurred. It seems that there was a garrison of Roman soldiers stationed in or near this place, one of whose officers—perhaps the officer in command—was a centurion (captain of a hundred men), who entertained towards the Jews a kind feeling, and for their religion a respect, by no means common among the Roman legions. He had even built for the people at Capernaum the synagogue in which they worshipped, and in which they had heard the words of Christ and seen his miracles. This centurion had a favourite slave, who had fallen dangerously ill, and for whom he was under great concern. Having heard—for who had not heard?—of the wonderful cures performed by Christ, hope for his beloved servant



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.



Roman Centurion.—Matt. viii.

arose within him. He was filled with an exalted idea of the person and character of Jesus; and, diffident of obtaining attention from him, he persuaded the chief Jews of the place to apply on his behalf. They did so, saying that he was worthy for whom he should do this, “for he loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue.” Then Jesus went with them to the centurion’s house: but before they reached it, came a message from the centurion—saying, “Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.” Luke vii. 6, 7. • Jesus was

## JESUS AT NAIN.

much struck by this. The Jews admitted his power to heal, but deemed it needful that he should be personally present and touch the diseased person with his hand. But here was a foreigner, a heathen, who had such faith as to suppose that a word from Christ, spoken in the absence of the diseased person, would suffice to effect the cure. Christ therefore turned round to the people who followed him, and said, "I have not found so great faith—no, not in Israel;" and he added, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." This is to us a very intelligible allusion to the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews: but to the people it was obscure; and as they probably interpreted it to mean that many such heathen would become proselytes to Judaism, it did not give the offence with which some of our Lord's later and plainer declarations on this point were received.

The friends who had brought to Jesus the message of the centurion returned to the house, and found that he had received the reward of his faith in the perfect recovery of his servant.

The day after this Jesus proceeded to Nain, thirteen miles to the south of the place where the Sermon on the Mount is supposed to have been delivered. This was then a place of some consequence, but has now dwindled to a small hamlet under the name of Nein. On approaching the gate of this town the crowd which attended our Lord was met by another, probably as numerous, issuing from the city. It was the becoming custom of the Jews to bury their dead outside the towns: nor was this peculiar to them, but common to all the nations of the East and West, until the present pernicious practice of burying in or near churches, first introduced in honour of the martyrs, was

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.



Raising the Widow's Son.

extended into general use. The crowd which issued from the gate of Nain was in attendance upon the funeral of a young man, the only son of a poor woman, and her only stay—for she was a widow. The attendance was so great on account of the number of persons who were anxious to testify their sympathy and respect.

This scene was well calculated to move the compassion of him “who went about doing good;” and to lead him to do a greater work than any which he had yet performed. Full of Divine tenderness, he cheered the desolate mother, and said unto her, “Weep not;” and the bearers of the corpse he directed to lay down their melancholy burden. Among the Jews the dead were carried to the grave upon open biers, and not in closed coffins, the use of which was, in the time of our Lord, confined to the higher classes. Turning to the bier, Jesus said, “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!” The “dull cold ear of death” heard his voice; the youth rose up, and began to speak to the

## RAISING THE DEAD.

persons around him. Jesus then consigned him to his mother. Who can tell the mysteries of human feeling with which that mother received that son from the dead, and held him once more in her embrace? Then indeed did the "widow's heart sing for joy"—a joy so great that, in her case, all wonder was doubtless absorbed in it.

Now it was not so with the people present. To heal the sick and to cast out unclean spirits were indeed acts of wonder to all who saw them; but to restore the dead, to snatch from the grave its prey, was a prodigy so great as filled the beholders not only with amazement, but fear. They glorified God for visiting his people by sending a great prophet among them; for although doubtful that Jesus was the very Christ, the greatness of the deed satisfied them of the divine power with which he was invested. They could not but see in Jesus one greater than even Elias, inasmuch as, without the use of prayer, or stretching himself upon the body, but by a simple order, he had, in a manner utterly unexampled, restored the dead to life.

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## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER XIII.

JOHN'S DISCIPLES WITNESS THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST—OUR LORD DECLARES THE CHARACTER AND MISSION OF JOHN—BECOMES THE GUEST OF SIMON THE PHARISEE—EASTERN MODE OF RECLINING AT TABLE—A WOMAN ANOINTS THE FEET OF JESUS—OBJECTION OF SIMON THERETO—ANSWER OF OUR LORD—JESUS GOES AGAIN INTO GALILEE—HIS FOLLOWERS—THEY ARRIVE AT CAPERNAUM.



HE great miracle recorded in our last chapter gave a new impulse to the general discussion respecting the prophet of Nazareth. It attracted the attention of John the Baptist in his prison, and decided him to require of Jesus an explicit declaration as to whether he was or was not the promised Messiah. We may ask how it was that

John, who had already more than once declared his perfect satisfaction on this point, should now be in any doubt. The answer may be, that John's ideas in this matter may have become unsettled by Jesus not having manifested himself as the Messiah in the way which he expected, or advanced his claim under the conditions which he had supposed. He therefore sent two of his disciples to Christ to ask the question, "Art thou He that should come? or look we for another?" Jesus, at the time the messengers came, was engaged in healing the diseased, casting out evil spirits, and restoring sight to the blind. Instead of returning a direct answer, he desired the disciples to tell their master the things they had seen performed:—"Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the

## JOHN THE BAPTIST.

poor the Gospel is preached." As these were the characteristics of the Messiah's kingdom, according to the prophets, this explicit reference to them *as evidence*, was calculated to satisfy John and his disciples that the great deeds of Christ were not to be regarded as the acts of a mere prophet, but as the required and appointed testimonials of "the Christ of God."

When John's disciples had departed, our Lord began to speak to those around him of John and his character and mission. He spoke of the austerity and holiness of his person, the greatness of his function, and the divine character of his mission. He affirmed that John was greater than any preceding prophet, indeed the greatest of men born of women. He was a burning and a shining light, the second "Elias" of the prophets—and yet, added Jesus, "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he;" meaning, that, as belonging to the old system about to be done away, or at most occupying an intermediate place between the old and the new, any Christian teacher, instructed in the things pertaining to Christ's spiritual kingdom, had points of superiority even over John the Baptist. Jesus concluded with a striking illustration of the perversity of the nation, in the reception which He and the Baptist equally met with, notwithstanding the difference in their course of conduct. The Baptist, who came neither eating nor drinking, that by his austere and mortified deportment he might gain the reverence of the people, could not obtain acceptance; neither could Jesus, who, on the contrary, came eating and drinking, and whose manners were framed after the common use and habits of men. The austerities of the one they ascribed to insanity; and the sociality of the other, to a conviviality of disposition unseemly in a teacher and a prophet. This gave him occasion more especially to reprehend the towns which had witnessed his greatest works,

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, in that their hardness and unbelief had remained unmoved. For this a doom more severe than that of Sodom was declared to be in store for them : for even Sodom had sinned against less light than had been shed upon them. This implied the doctrine which Jesus took many other occasions to inculcate—that men were to be judged not so much with reference to the positive qualities of sin, as with regard to the degree of light and knowledge, or means of knowledge, against which sin is committed. He admitted, however, that the things he taught were harder to be received by the high and lofty than by the lowly, and the poor, and the humble ; and he thanked God that, although these things were hidden from the wise and mighty of the world, they were manifest even to babes.

Our Lord concluded his admirable discourse by calling upon his auditors to exchange the heavy burden of the Levitical Law for the ease, rest, and peace offered by the Gospel. This invitation, equally applicable to all the weary and heavy laden, from every cause, in every age, was couched in the emphatic and ever memorable words—“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

This discourse seems to have made considerable impression upon some even of the Pharisees who were present, and one of them, named Simon, invited him to dine at his house.

It must be understood that the Roman custom of reclining on couches at meal-times was at this period in common use among persons of the higher and middle classes in Judea. It is not, indeed, necessary to suppose that the Jews borrowed it from the Romans. It was a Babylonian and Persian custom, which found

## LYING AT MEAT.

its way to the west of the Euphrates, and which the Hebrews probably acquired during their subjection to the kings of the East. Three benches were placed so as to form three sides of a hollow square which contained the table. The guests reclined upon the benches or couches, with their feet turned out behind and their faces towards the table, resting their bodies in a half-raised position upon cushions or upon the left arm. This explains several passages of the New Testament, especially those which describe Lazarus as lying in Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 23, and John as leaning on his Lord's bosom at the last supper, John xiii. 23: the person so described as lying in the bosom of another



Modes of lying at Meat. (Poussin.)



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

was of course the one who reclined next below that other, and whose head necessarily approached to the bosom of the one who lay above him. There was usually a good space between the walls of the guest-chamber and the back of the couches on which the guests reclined.

It was quite easy for any persons, at such an entertainment, to gain access to the public guest-chamber, and to remain unmolested so long as they did not interfere with the operations of the servants, which they were in little danger of doing while they remained in the side space between the walls and the back of the couches, seeing that the business of the servants was almost confined to the open side of the square formed by the couches.

While they were at meat, a woman of the place came and planted herself behind Jesus. She is described as one "who had been a sinner," by which it is understood that she had led an impure life, and we see no reason to dispute this conclusion. We must only contend that this woman, described distinctively as "a sinner," is not to be confounded with Mary Magdalene, nor with Mary the sister of Lazarus of Bethany, of whom transactions nearly similar are recorded. Much confusion has arisen from regarding as one, three distinct persons and transactions.

This woman, as Jeremy Taylor finely expresses it, "came to Jesus into the Pharisee's house, not—as did the staring multitude—to glut their eyes with the sight of a miraculous and glorious person; nor—as did the centurion, or the Syro-Phœnician, or the ruler of the synagogue—for the cure of her sickness, or in behalf of her friend, or child, or servant; but—the only example of so coming—she came in remorse and regret for her sins, she came to Jesus to lay her burden at his feet, to present him with a broken heart, a weeping eye, and great affection." She came trembling, and wept bitterly for her sins at his feet. Simon had

## ANOINTING THE FEET OF JESUS.

neglected to order his servants to wash the feet of Jesus, although this was an act of civility and attention then frequently observed in Palestine. Perceiving this, the weeping sinner let fall her tears upon them, and, having bathed them with that tribute of her grief, wiped them with the hair of her head.

Having thus bathed his feet, the woman drew forth a vessel of precious ointment, and breaking off the stopple, the place was filled with the rich odour of the perfume she cast upon her Saviour's feet.

This anointing of the feet was by no means a common act; and the anointing them with this kind of ointment was accounted a



Anointing the Feet of Jesus. (Sebastian Ricci.)

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

luxurious extravagance even in kings. It must have been worth nine or ten pounds of our money, or probably more in comparative value, when the great difference in the general cost of commodities is considered.

The fragrance of the ointment drew the general attention of the guests to this act of the woman. They formed their different opinions upon it, and narrowly watched the effect which it would have upon Jesus himself, and the manner in which it would be noticed by him. The thought which arose in the mind of the host himself was characteristic of the Pharisee. We are told that "he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner." It was this unuttered thought of the Pharisee which our Lord saw fit to mark out for his most pointed notice. "Simon," he said, "there was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?" Simon could not but answer, "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most." Jesus answered—"Thou hast rightly judged;" and then turning towards the woman, he added—"Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house: thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." He then said to the woman herself those great words, "Thy sins are forgiven." This created a deep sensation among

## MARY MAGDALENE.

those who heard it; for they knew it was not for man to forgive sins; and yet they were by no means prepared to recognise Jesus as more than man. While they were murmuring among themselves, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" Christ, again turning round to the woman, dismissed her with—"Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace!"

After this Jesus set forth upon another tour in Galilee, performing his usual works of mercy, and seizing all suitable occasions of pouring forth those persuasive utterances on which the people generally hung with admiration and delight, while those who were wise in their own conceits, found in all he said matter for cavil and reproach. In this excursion he was attended by the twelve apostles, and also by some women of property and consideration, who out of their abundance felt it their duty to provide food and such other necessities as the party required. Among these women we find particular mention of Mary Magdalene, so called from Magdala, near Capernaum, her native place; she was probably a widow, and is not to be confounded with "the woman who was a sinner," who has just been under our notice. She owed a debt of deep gratitude to Christ, who on some former occasion had dispossessed her of "seven devils." Another of these ladies was the wife, or more probably widow, of Chuza, the steward of Herod Antipas; and another is only known by her name of Susanna. This incidental statement of St. Luke (viii. 3) is corroborated, also very incidentally, by St. Mark (xv. 41), who, speaking of the women who were present at our Lord's crucifixion, says that when Jesus was in Galilee, "they followed him and ministered unto him of their substance." We thus obtain information respecting the mode in which Jesus and his apostles were principally supported during those constant movements which precluded them from earning their own sub-

## · LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

sistence. Most of them had lived by their labour; and the few who may be supposed to have had some property, could not long have supported the expenses of so large a body, had it not been for the assistance obtained from these and other pious women who appear for the most part to have received from our Lord—in the cure of painful diseases—benefits which they estimated beyond all price.

The travelling of men and women in parties from all parts of the country to Jerusalem, at the great festivals, familiarized the mind to such associations in travel, and relieves all that seeming impropriety which the absence of any such circumstance in our own social habits might induce us to connect with them.

Jesus did nothing more in this town which is recorded; and at length he again returned to Capernaum. On his arrival, he went with his followers to the house which he commonly frequented, which was speedily so beset by people anxious to see and hear him, that the inmates were unable to take their usual meals. Heedless of this, Christ, although just arrived from a journey, and needing refreshment, went forth and spoke to the multitude; but when his friends within knew this, they went forth and constrained him to come in and obtain the refreshment and rest which he was supposed much to need.

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## CASTING OUT DEVILS.

### CHAPTER XIV.

CURE OF THE DEAF AND DUMB MAN—THE PHARISEES' MODE OF ACCOUNTING FOR THIS MIRACLE—OUR LORD'S REPLY—THE JEWS SEEK A SIGN FROM HEAVEN—THEY RECEIVE A SIGN—ARRIVAL OF THE MOTHER AND BRETHREN OF JESUS—JESUS DINES AT A PHARISEE'S HOUSE—IS APPEALED TO BY TWO BROTHERS RESPECTING THEIR INHERITANCE—WARNS THE PEOPLE AGAINST AVARICE—ENCOURAGES TRUST IN PROVIDENCE—FAMILIAR ILLUSTRATIONS, COMPARISONS, AND PARABLES.



HE next recorded act of Christ, probably on the following day, was the relief of a poor creature who was brought to him, "possessed with a devil, deaf and dumb." At his word, the man's tongue was loosened, and his ears unstopped, and he who had long been mute to all the world, and all the many-voiced world mute

to him, both spake and saw. A man in this plight is usually well known in any place which he inhabits. This miracle therefore made a strong impression upon the people, and led them to throng after Jesus with fresh ardour wherever he appeared.

The Pharisees, and others of their mode of thinking, were much troubled at this; and seeing that they could not deny so plain a miracle, they proceeded to account for it after a peculiar fashion of their own. "This fellow," said they, "doth not cast out devils but through Beelzebub, the prince of devils;" that is, he expels the weaker demons by the aid of the stronger. Christ was not slow in exposing the absurdity of this reasoning. Citing

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.



Miracle of curing the Deaf.

a well-known proverb, he said :— “ Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation ; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand : ” and by way of applying this, he continued, “ If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself ; how shall then his kingdom stand ? ” And then he added— “ If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out ? ” This question supposes, what indeed appears from other passages of Scripture, that besides Jesus and his apostles, many at this time went about pretending to cast out demons, both by exorcisms and medicaments, Luke ix. 45 ; Acts xix. 23 ; compare Josephus, ‘ Antiquities,’ vii. 6. 3 ; viii. 2. 5. It is probable that these exorcisms were sometimes effectual by means of the accompanying medicaments. This superstition continued for some time after the apostles, and even led in part to the use of exorcisms in the early Christian church.

After some further remarks, Christ uttered those awful words, which in all ages have engaged the profound attention of the

## REBUKE OF UNBELIEF.

Church—"All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." This awful declaration has been variously understood: but taken in connection with what precedes and follows, and with the circumstances which called it forth, it seems to point to those who ascribed to the agency of devils the manifest and glorious works of God, such as those which were wrought by our divine Saviour. The crimes of the heart are greater than those of the hand; and surely, in the lowest depths of the most bitter heart there lurks not a sin equally horrid with that which Christ thus declares to be without forgiveness in this world or in the world to come.

This seems to have silenced that set of Pharisees. But soon after, Jesus was assailed by another set, who assumed the characters not of accusers, but of doubters. They came around him, saying, "Master, we would see a sign from thee." They meant a sign from heaven, such as some of those of Moses and Elias, and such as the Messiah might be expected to afford. The implied argument was, that the wonders he wrought on earth might be possibly effected by the power of Satan; but wonders from heaven would be above all such suspicion, and would bring conviction to their minds. But Christ knew that they asked not from the desire to be convinced, or from the wish to obtain satisfactory proof of his divine mission, but in order to find new ground for cavil and objection. Some believed him to be an impostor, who could not give any such sign, and these hoped to confound him by the demand; others were prepared to cavil, even if such sign had been given—they would doubtless have



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

disputed its reality, alleging that by some optical illusion things were made to seem to be, which were not.

To this demand Christ replied by a keen rebuke of that rooted unbelief, which was always demanding proof, and would not believe proof when it was given. He refused them a sign from heaven; he refused them any but a sign from earth—a marvellous sign, greater than any from heaven which they had demanded, and which could only be understood by the light of after-days:—“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” This was an allusion to the sign hereafter to be given by his resurrection from the grave, which would be sufficient to convince and satisfy all who were not wilfully and desperately blind.

Our Lord then proceeded in an eloquent and impressive discourse to illustrate by comparisons, and to denounce for condemnation, the unbelief of the generation to which he had appeared. He no sooner concluded, than a woman in the company cried out:—“Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked!” And she—the very woman thus declared to be blessed above all others—she must have heard these words, for at that very time she stood without, accompanied by some of his relations, but unable to approach him for the crowd. She heard the words, and she heard the answer—“Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.” Not, as Jeremy Taylor remarks, “not denying her to be highly blessed who had received the honour of being the mother of the Messiah, but advancing the dignities of spiritual excellences far above the greatest temporal honour in the world.” Christ, when informed that his mother



The Sign of Jonah. (West.)



## DINNER WITH A PHARISEE.

and brethren were without, desirous of getting access to him, still spoke in the same strain; for turning round to his disciples, he said—"Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

The occasion of this visit from the mother and brethren of Christ is not very clearly indicated. Perhaps at Nazareth, from which he had now been a good while absent, they had heard so much of his proceedings, and of the bad feeling which in various high quarters he had excited, that they had come over to Capernaum, to see for themselves how matters stood, and possibly to dissuade him from a course of life likely to bring him into danger. Whatever was their object, the maternal affection of Mary, and her natural desire to see Jesus, would be a sufficient reason for her visit, without supposing that she in any way distrusted the proceedings of her glorious son, of whose divine origin and



Christ eating with the Pharisee.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

illustrious destinies such convincing evidence had in former days been given to her.

The discourse of Jesus on this occasion engaged a Pharisee to invite him to a dinner, at which a considerable number of other Pharisees and teachers of the Law were present. As all the Orientals feed themselves with their fingers, they are very careful to wash their hands before they eat, and the Jews did so. But



Washing Hands.

besides this, which was necessary to cleanliness, and which of course our Lord and his disciples never omitted, the Pharisees, and all those who made high professions of religious purity, washed themselves with particular care, and after a peculiar manner; and any one who did not this, they regarded quite as unclean as if he had not washed at all. But Christ paid no attention to this, which excited the surprise and contempt of the self-satisfied Pharisees there present. This gave our Lord occasion to speak in strong language of the outward show of superior holiness which these people affected, while their hearts were full of all

## ARBITRATION.

abomination and uncleanness. The home-thrust thus made at their consciences had the effect which in their case might be expected. They were in the highest degree enraged, and they "began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak many things:" and this they did in the hope that in his wrath some words might fall from him which would give them matter for accusation against him, either before the Roman government or the Jewish council. But the prudence of Christ frustrated their malice, in the midst of all the plainness of his uncompromising reproofs.

While Jesus was thus engaged in the house of the Pharisee, a great crowd of people assembled outside, who trod one upon another in their eagerness to be in the way of seeing and hearing him on his coming forth. When he did come out, he began first in that large audience to caution his own disciples against those principles of action by which the character of the Pharisees was deformed; and instead of hypocritical appearances and pretences, to maintain a conscience void of offence, at whatever cost.

While he spoke, one of the crowd implored him to use the authority which belonged to his character, to induce his brother to give to him that portion of the inheritance which, since the death of their father, he had withheld. It was not unusual among the Jews for men to submit their differences for arbitration to persons venerated for their religious character, but who had no legal power of enforcing their own decrees. In the present case the man might also have expected that Jesus, as the Messiah, would act in the character of a prince, and so decide controversies relating to property. But Christ always resisted this notion; and he answered, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Which was as much as to say,

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

“ My kingdom is of a spiritual nature, and I meddle not with the civil rights and properties of men.”

It is probable that the other brother was present, and that there was too eager a desire in both to obtain the largest possible portion of the property in dispute. These suppositions are suggested by the fact that Jesus, who was always ready to give to his discourses whatever point they might derive from instant circumstances, proceeded to warn the assembled people against avarice and worldly-mindedness, and to direct their wishes to divine attainments and heavenly felicities. In the course of which he put forth the significant parable of the prosperous man whose mind was fully occupied in planning larger barns wherein to store the increasing produce of his fields, when he was arrested by the awful intimation—“Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?”

Most of those whom he addressed were, however, in such humble circumstances of life, as to be in less danger from setting their hearts upon earthly treasures, than from the cares of the passing day and overmuch solicitude about the necessary supplies of life. Against this also he therefore proceeded to caution them, and encouraged them to ease of mind in all these respects, by the consideration that divine Providence would not fail to make adequate provision for the real wants of all those who made the kingdom of God and his righteousness the *first* objects of their solicitude. “Consider the ravens,” he said; “for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn: and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?” There is the more force in this, when we bear in mind how specially observable, in the opinion of the ancients, was the good providence of God with respect to ravens or crows. Several of

## THE LILY.

them remark that young crows are driven away from the nest as soon as they are able to fly, and are afterwards supported, we scarce know how, by a remarkable providence of God. Philo, a learned Jew of those times, also remarks that many are naturally forgetful, and often fail to return to their nests; yet, by the wise and merciful providence of God, they instinctively heap together in their nests whatever may breed worms, by which their abandoned young are nourished and preserved. Some of these notions concerning crows are now known to be incorrect; and we mention them merely to show the emphasis which their existence in the popular mind must have afforded to the beautiful allusion which our Lord makes to these birds.

Again, lilies are abundant in Palestine—and at the time of our Saviour's discourse they were probably in bloom. Referring to these, Jesus said, "Consider the lilies of the field"—not of the garden, cultivated with care—"how they grow. They toil not"—as men in their laborious employments,—“neither do they spin”—like women in their more sedentary occupations; “and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.” And then came the forcible application: “Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith!” This will be the better understood when it is remarked that, after the moisture of spring has been absorbed, all wild herbage and decayed plants become rapidly dry in Palestine under the fervent heat of summer, and are, with all other decayed and dry vegetable products, collected for fuel. There was, and is, much scarcity of fuel in Palestine; but, except in the depth of winter, there was little need of it but for cooking and baking bread. This is the reason that fuel is usually described as being “cast into the oven.” And this



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

phrase may be better understood if we remember that the oven was usually a pit in the floor, the fire in which served both for fuel and, in winter, for warmth. These dry stalks and twigs were particularly suitable for the baking of bread, and were therefore preferred for the oven when bread was to be baked.

Taking such facts as these into account, we begin to perceive that the discourses of Christ often received a strong emphasis from surrounding circumstances, or from the sentiments and manners of the people, which does not readily or immediately occur to us under the great differences in our social condition, our climate, and our age.

From this, by an easy transition, our Lord proceeds to dwell upon the necessity of a state of constant preparedness for removal from this world and for the awful solemnities of the world to come. This, according to his custom, he illustrates by comparisons and parables, mostly drawn from the condition of servants awaiting the return of their master. The good servants wait with their loins girded for ready service, and, if it be night, with their lamps burning, their very uncertainty as to the exact time of their master's return making them to be the more anxious to be ready whenever he does come. But the bad servants, thinking their master never will come, because his coming is delayed, begin to eat, to drink, and to quarrel—when suddenly the master arrives, to their shame and confusion, and inflicts upon them the due punishment of their misdeeds.

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## THE FOLLOWERS OF JUDAS OF GAULONITIS.

### CHAPTER XV.

OUR LORD CONDEMNS THE HARSH JUDGMENT OF THE JEWS—HE TEACHES THE PEOPLE IN PARABLES  
—PARABLE OF THE SOWER—OF THE TARES—KINGDOM OF GOD COMPARED TO THE GROWTH OF  
CORN—TO A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED,—TO A PIECE OF LEAVEN,—TO TREASURE HID IN A  
FIELD,—TO A PEARL OF GREAT PRICE,—AND TO A NET CAST INTO THE SEA—WHAT IS REQUIRED  
OF THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST.



WHEN Jesus had concluded his discourse, some of the persons present began to speak of a matter which excited much attention at that time. A man named Judas of Gaulonitis went about asserting that God was the only sovereign of the Hebrew nation, and that consequently it was unlawful to acknowledge any human sovereignty, much less to pay tribute and yield obedience to a heathen people like the Romans. He obtained many followers, chiefly in Galilee, who gave much trouble to the Roman government. Lately Pilate had slain a body of these men, when they had gone to Jerusalem at one of the public feasts, so that in effect, "their blood was mingled with (that of) their sacrifices."

Now the Jews believed that grievous disorders or heavy calamities were sent by God in punishment for sin. Perceiving that the case was mentioned by those present with this feeling, Jesus took occasion to contradict this notion; affirming that those who heard him were equally sinners before God, and should also perish unless they repented. With the same view he also referred to an accident which formed the talk of the day—the

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

fall of the tower of Siloam, in Jerusalem, whereby eighteen persons had been killed; asserting that these persons were not necessarily sinners above others for having been thus destroyed; although this was the full persuasion of all his auditors. Moham-medanism, which borrowed much from the Gospels, has produced a change of opinion in this respect in Western Asia, so that any one who now dies by such an accident as the fall of a tower or of a wall, is regarded as a martyr.

The same day our Lord left the town, and went out by the sea-shore; and being still attended by a great multitude of people, he went into a boat, and addressed them from thence. His discourse was still chiefly in parables, most of which were taken from the culture of the soil, and were possibly suggested by the agricultural operations then in progress upon the sides of the surrounding hills.

The first was the parable of the sower, in which the different reception which the word of God finds in different hearts is compared to the different soils on which the seed, broad-cast by the sower, falls.



Parable of the Sower.

### PARABLE OF THE TARES.

Then followed the parable of the tares sown maliciously among good corn. These the zeal of the husbandmen would have rooted up as soon as they appeared, but for the sage discretion of the master, who feared that the tares could not be pulled up without damage to the young wheat: "Let both grow together



Parable of the Tares.

unto the harvest," he said: "and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them into bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

The three following parables, that of the insensible growth of corn, certain and timely, while man goes about the daily business of life and heeds not of it, Mark iv. 26—29; that of the small mustard seed becoming a large tree, in whose branches the birds of the air find shelter, Matt. xiii. 31, 32; and that of the small piece of leaven which left in three measures of meal leavened the whole mass; all have seemingly the same reference to the gradual but sure spread of the Gospel under the preaching of the



MUSTARD - "Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs"  
Matt. xiii. 32.

Apostles; while, without doubt, there is in them a secondary reference to the rise and progress of divine grace in the soul of every subject of Christ's spiritual kingdom.

After this Jesus returned to the town; and when he was alone with his disciples, he explained to them some of the parables which he had delivered to the people. He also added other short parables designed yet further to illustrate the character and objects of the divine kingdom. First, he compared it to a treasure hid in a field, which when a man had discovered, he joyfully hastened to sell all he possessed to buy that field. In the East in times of trouble large amounts of property are concealed, the owners of which are slain, or go away and never return to reclaim what they hid; therefore every one is more or less a treasure-seeker,

## PARABLE OF THE JEWEL MERCHANT.

and lives in the hope of being some day or other enriched by the discovery of hidden treasure. The same feeling prevailed in this country during the civil wars and troubles of former ages, so that even at this day there are perhaps not many villages in our rural districts which do not possess some tradition relating to the discovery of a crock of gold.

The next parable, of a merchant—that is a travelling dealer in jewels—seeking goodly pearls, and selling all that he had to buy one pearl of great price which he had found, describes a circumstance which at present occurs often to the highly intelligent and most respectable class of men who follow that vocation, and who not seldom spend the best years of their lives in travelling to and from distant lands in search of “goodly pearls,” and other precious stones. There is perhaps not one of them who has not at times met with a jewel of such great beauty and high price, that he has been obliged to sell all his inferior jewels and every valuable article he possessed in order to obtain it.

The next parable compared the kingdom of heaven to “a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind; and when it was full they drew to shore, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.” This is of course done more or less by all fishermen; but it has perhaps not occurred to many readers that this selection was a nice and important matter among the Hebrews, who were forbidden to eat fish devoid of fins or scales, and among whom, therefore, the fish described as “bad” must have been more numerous than among other people.

Afterwards, Christ perceiving that the crowd of persons assembled in the neighbourhood began to increase very rapidly, thought it expedient to pass over to the other side of the lake. But before he departed, he found occasion to deliver some

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

emphatic and pointed answers to the declarations of two or three persons.

The first was one of the scribes, who being about to depart said, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Jesus neither declined nor permitted this attendance, but said what probably was enough to deter a man in his condition—"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head"—meaning that he had no certain dwelling-place, no home, for any one who followed him; which may satisfy us that even in Capernaum, which seems to have been his most usual residence, he either occupied a hired residence or lived in the house of a disciple.

Another expressed the same intention, but said:—"Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." It might certainly have been expected, in the first view, that Jesus, full of kind affections, would have complied with this, when even Elijah, severe as was his character, allowed Elisha to bid adieu to his parents, 1 Kings xix. 20. But the answer of Jesus turned upon the metaphorical meaning of the word "dead." "Let the dead (the unconverted or spiritually dead) bury their dead; but go thou and preach the Gospel." Of two duties the lesser must yield to the greater; and the duty of following Christ and preaching his Gospel was more urgent and quite as sacred as that which prevented the high priest among the Jews from approaching the dead of his house, or from showing any signs of mourning for them.

When another said, "Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go and bid them farewell that are at home at my house;" the reply of Jesus was in an agricultural metaphor—"No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." This interdiction "to cast one longing, lingering look

### EASTERN MODE OF PLOUGHING.

behind" is beautifully appropriate, from the necessity which the plougher is under of keeping his attention fixed upon the furrows and not allowing them to deviate; and this was the more necessary in Eastern countries, on account of the extreme shallowness of the furrow, where the plough does little more than scratch the surface of the soil, and would be therefore the more easily turned aside.



Eastern mode of Ploughing.



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER XVI.

CHRIST IN THE STORM—HE STILLETH THE TEMPEST—ROCK SEPULCHRES OF THE EAST—  
CURE OF THE DEMONIAK AT GADARA—MATTHEW'S FEAST—OBJECTIONS OF THE PHARISEES  
ANSWERED—THE PRAYER OF JAIRUS—CURE OF AN AFFLICTED WOMAN—THE RAISING OF  
JAIRUS' DAUGHTER—TWO BLIND MEN RECEIVE THEIR SIGHT—JESUS RETURNS TO NAZARETH  
—SENDS FORTH HIS APOSTLES TO PREACH AND WORK MIRACLES.



JESUS then entered the vessel which was to bear him to the other side of the lake. While they were on the passage they encountered one of those sudden and furious storms which often arise in lakes surrounded by mountains. The waves broke over the frail bark, and the danger was very great. And where was Jesus? He was quietly asleep in the hinder part of the vessel, and slept on undisturbed by the noise and uproar of the tempest. At length the disciples, who, although familiar with the lake, were alarmed at this danger, went and awoke him, with the words, Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Christ immediately arose, and rebuked the wind, and said to the raging sea, "Peace, be still"—and in an instant the storm went down. It did not merely abate, but ceased altogether, for "immediately there was a great calm,"—not only a calm, but *a great calm*. In one instant the storm was raging at the highest pitch, in the next scarcely a ripple was upon its surface. Jesus then turned to the disciples and said: "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" thus gently rebuking them for not having expected to be saved by him asleep as well as awake. Then were they filled with



Christ in the Storm. (Rembrandt.)



## THE GADARENES.

astonishment, and said one to another, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and sea obey him?" They had seen him heal the sick, which was no more than physicians professed to do; but now they see the winds and the sea submissive to him, and in this they recognise a superhuman power. Their words teach us that they now began to perceive in Jesus something more than human greatness; for the sovereignty over the seas and winds is an attribute of God, Psalm lxxv. 7.



Christ in the Storm.

Jesus then passed to the other side of the lake, and came into the country of the Gadarenes, of which Gadara was the chief town, and also the capital of Peræa. This country was inhabited by a mixed population of Jews, proselytes, and Syrians, who were looked down upon by the less mixed Jews of Judea, who placed them much on the same level with the Galileans, and deemed them but one degree better than Samaritans.

Near the place where our Lord came to shore, there were many tombs, which were either excavations in the living rock or such roomy constructions as we still find in the East. These then, as



Interior of a Rock Sepulchre.

now, often furnished places of shelter to homeless wanderers. From these tombs came forth a man to meet Jesus as he came up the road. This man was one of those demoniacs of whom we so often read in the New Testament. He was one of a very peculiar and terrible sort. He “had devils a long time, and wore no clothes, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains; because he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame him. And always, day and night, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones.” This man, seeing Jesus afar off, ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, acknowledging him as the Son of the most high God,

## THE LAW RELATIVE TO SWINE.

and imploring him not to inflict torments upon him. This supplication is supposed to have been dictated by a vivid recollection in such unfortunate persons of the whips and chains with which they had been constrained, of the severe operations to which they had been subjected, and of the nauseous medicaments which had been forced upon them. The like of this they would naturally dread from one in whom they recognised the power to cast out devils. The man said, in the name of his indwelling demons, that their name was legion, "for we are many:" and, perceiving that Christ would effect a cure, he in their name besought leave to enter into a herd of swine which was feeding hard by upon the mountains. This was done seemingly under the notion that, next to the sepulchres, the swine formed the most suiting habitation for them.

Jesus granted this request, "and the unclean spirits went out and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea (there were about two thousand), and were choked in the sea."

It has been remarked that this and the cursing of the barren fig-tree are the only examples of severity recorded of our Lord. The present case is usually explained by supposing that the owners were Jews, whom the Levitical law prohibited from eating or keeping swine. It is certain that they might not eat them, or touch their dead carcasses, Deut. xiv. 8; but it would be difficult to find any order against feeding and taking care of them. The prohibition of touching the dead carcass implies that the living carcass might be touched; and it has been suspected that when Moses ordered the commutation of a shekel and a half in lieu of the first-born of unclean animals, he had chiefly swine in view. There is, in fact, no ground for the notion that the Jews might not keep swine, except that there seems a want of a sufficient

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

reason for keeping them when they were not used for food. But they might rear them for sale to the heathen, among whom they were in great demand. And it appears that, in fact, they did so till about seventy years before Christ, when the ceremonial pollution occasioned by the introduction of a hog into the temple led to the issue of an order against keeping hogs. And the terms of this order lead to the conclusion that the Jews then not only reared hogs for sale, but used their skins, and employed the fat for tallow and ointment. This order seems, however, from the present instance, not to have been strictly observed. The owners of the swine and other people of this place, who seem to have had more of these herds, were by no means satisfied with this proceeding. The swineherds ran away and spread the news around. This brought many people to meet Jesus, and that apparently with no very friendly intention ; but when they saw the late furious maniac sitting quietly at the feet of Jesus, "clothed and in his right mind," they were afraid to act offensively, and were content to beseech the Lord that he would depart from them.

Jesus complied, and returned to the ship. The man who had been healed implored leave to go with him. He probably feared that he should again fall under the power of the devils, if separated from his deliverer. But Jesus would not allow this, but told him, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he hath had compassion upon thee." The man more than obeyed, for he went far and wide through Decapolis, proclaiming the great deed which had been wrought on his behalf.

On his return to Capernaum, the apostle Matthew made a great feast for his master and fellow-disciples in his own house. The other persons who were present at this feast were chiefly "publicans and sinners," as might be supposed from the position

## FASTING.

which Matthew had filled, and the connections which that position had led him to form. The Pharisees failed not, as usual, to take notice of this; and some of them said to the disciples, "Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?" This was probably at the end of the feast, when they were leaving the house, for it was not likely that Pharisees would enter the house of a Publican. Jesus heard this, and himself answered, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. . . . I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

On the same occasion Jesus had to meet the inquiry of some of the disciples of John, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" This, doubtless, refers to private fasts; such, probably, as John's disciples kept on account of the imprisonment of their master, and such as the Pharisees observed in obedience to the rules of their great doctors. Jesus beautifully answered: "Can the children of the bride-chamber [the attendants on the bridegroom] mourn, so long as the bridegroom is with them?" As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast." This, while it justified the disciples of John for fasting, seeing that their bridegroom had been taken from them, excused his own disciples for not fasting, seeing that their bridegroom was still with them.



Saint Matthew. (Rubens.)



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Jesus added several short parables, probably suggested by their present circumstances. One of them was—"No man putteth new wine into old bottles, else the new wine will burst the bottle and be spilled, and the bottle shall perish; but new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved." This refers to the skin bottles, or bags made of the skins of kids, goats, and even oxen, such as are still in use throughout the East, and even in some parts of Europe, such as Spain, Hungary, Turkey, &c. Nor have they been unknown in this country.

While Jesus was speaking, one of the chief men of Capernaum, a ruler of the synagogue, came and threw himself at his feet. His name was Jairus. He had one only child, a daughter, and she lay at the point of death. All help had been in vain, and now, in his despair, he came to Jesus, whom he had probably, in more prosperous days, contemned. "Come," he cried, "and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live." This faith was less than that of the centurion, who deemed that a word from Jesus might suffice to heal the distant sick. Jesus however went, attended by his disciples, and followed by a great throng,—the greater, perhaps, from the circumstance that Jairus was an eminent and well-known person at Capernaum. As they went along, Jesus turned suddenly round, and demanded, "Who touched my clothes?" The disciples, justly surprised at the question, said, "Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?" But Jesus knew that some one had touched him with a purpose, for he perceived "that virtue had gone out of him." He said so: and then an afflicted woman cast herself at his feet, and acknowledged the fact. Twelve long years had she been troubled with an issue of blood, and in that time she had spent all her substance in seeking aid of the physicians, and was nothing bettered, but

#### AFFLICTED WOMAN CURED.

rather worse. She then heard of Jesus, and repaired to him. But when she saw him in all that crowd, her heart seems, in one respect, to have failed her; she had not courage to arrest his progress, and reveal her peculiar maladies in that boisterous audience. But her faith strengthened as her courage failed; and she thought within herself that if she could but touch the hem of his garment she should be cured. She did so; and instantly she felt within herself that her cause of grief had departed from her. All this she declared as she lay trembling at the feet of Jesus. He was struck by this act of strong faith, and said to her, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace." We only add, that touching or kissing the hem of the garment is an act of great and reverential respect throughout the East; and that the "hem" of our Lord's garment was probably that hem or fringe which the law required all Jews to wear, and which is still worn by the Jews of all countries, whatever be their ordinary garb, when actually engaged in the services of their religion.

While this was passing some persons came from the house of Jairus, apprising him that his daughter was actually dead, and that, therefore, he need not trouble "the Master" any further. Jesus heard this, and addressed to Jairus the consolatory words, "Be not afraid; only believe, and she shall be made whole." These comforting words went to the heart of the bereaved father, and he proceeded with Jesus in silence to his own house. On arriving there it was found to be already changed to the house of death. The wailing women and the minstrels were already there, the doleful plaints of the former and the mournful notes of the latter filling the whole place with the well-known sounds of mourning for the dead. When Jesus entered he said, "Why make ye this ado and weep? The damsel is not dead, but

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

sleepeth." Knowing that she was really dead, and understanding these words literally, the audience laughed him to scorn. Leaving them to be instructed by the event, Jesus entered the chamber of the dead maiden, attended only by the afflicted parents, and by his favoured disciples, Peter and the sons of Zebedee. In their presence he approached the corpse, and taking the hand, said, "Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise." And instantly the hand which



Christ raising the Daughter of Jairus.—(Overbeck.)

he had taken obeyed the impulse which his had given, and she arose full of life and health from that couch on which she had sickened and died. To evince that she was not only alive, but well, Jesus ordered food to be set before her, of which, to the unutterable joy of her parents, she heartily partook. Jesus departed not without enjoining the parents to keep the matter a secret. But their gratitude and wonder could not endure this restraint; and the news of this great event spread rapidly throughout the town and neighbourhood.

No one can fail to admire the ease and unostentatious simplicity

## JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER.

which reigns throughout this transaction, as well as in the raising of the widow's son at Nain. The divine tranquillity, the simple words "I say unto thee, Arise," speak the presence of one who was the conscious master of all things—even of death.

The silence which the Lord imposed on the parents of the maiden was doubtless founded upon the dangers which this news, inconsiderately spread, might bring upon his person and doctrine. His hour, as he repeatedly declared, was not yet come. The renown of this great miracle, after he had so recently raised the son of the widow of Nain, would be sure to bring upon him in tenfold activity the hatred of his enemies, and lead them to plot against him, as actually happened afterwards, when he raised Lazarus from the dead. The time was coming when these miracles might be referred to by competent witnesses in proof of his divine mission, and then the benefit which the cause of the Gospel must derive from them would be realized. There was, however, nothing contradictory in his appealing to his works in proof of his mission, as in John x. 37, 38, where he says—"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." For he had only under particular circumstances enjoined this silence; and when it had been enjoined, silence had rarely been observed as he desired.

On his return from the house of Jairus, two blind men, hearing who passed by, followed after him, crying "Thou son of David, have mercy on us!" This calling him "the son of David" was a recognition of him as the expected Messiah: and it is not a little remarkable that this, in Gospel narratives, comes from blind men almost exclusively. Is it that the celestial light "shines inward," in proportion to the privation of the outward sense? Is it that the inner vision is "purged," till it is enabled to behold "things

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

invisible to mortal sight?" Be this as it may, the blind were, in Christ's own time, ever the foremost to acknowledge him in his true character: and among the blind we still have instances of unusual intensity of love towards the person and character of Jesus Christ, unusual reliance of all the affections on him, and unusual strength of hope in his salvation and glory.



The Blind restored to Sight. (S. Ricci.)

Jesus did not appear to notice them till he reached the house to which he was going; he then said to them, "Believe you that I am able to do this?" They answered, "Yea, Lord;" on which he touched their eyes, and said, "According to your faith be it unto you." And they had much faith, for their eyes were opened. The light of day shone in upon them, and the visible glories of this beautiful world were no longer mysteries to them.

Soon after this our Lord once more visited what was considered his native place, attended by his disciples. On the first Sabbath after his arrival he taught in the synagogue. But the men of Nazareth were not now better prepared than formerly to respect his

## THE APOSTLES SENT FORTH.

character and office. Their minds dwelt upon "all the disadvantages of his youth, and kindred, and trade, and poverty; still retaining in their minds the infirmities and humilities of his first years, and keeping the same apprehensions of him as a man and a glorious prophet which they had to him as a child in the shop of a carpenter" (Taylor). Jesus himself indicated the principle of their conduct to him by quoting the well-known proverb—"A prophet hath no where less honour than in his own country;" a proverb still constantly verified by the daily experience of many who, after having gathered renown and honour among strangers, find that in their native town the circumstances out of which they have risen, are far better remembered and more thought of than those to which they have attained, so that at home they are greater strangers than in remote cities and foreign lands. The influence of this feeling prevented the Nazarenes from seeing Christ in his true greatness; for it is emphatically remarked that "He could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief;" and this in two ways—for, first, their knowledge of his humble birth effectually prevented that implicit reliance upon his power which he invariably exacted, and which could alone render them worthy of his protection and help; and then, from the influence of the same feeling, they would not think it worth their while sedulously to bring their sick to Jesus, and humbly to seek his aid.

It was not long after this that Jesus conferred upon the twelve Apostles power to accomplish such miracles as he had himself wrought, even to the extent of raising the dead; and they were then sent forth two and two, to preach the Gospel throughout the country. Having dismissed them with an impressive charge respecting their course of proceeding, Jesus himself quitted Nazareth, and pursued his journey through Galilee.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER XVII.

CELEBRATION OF HEROD'S BIRTHDAY—BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—JESUS WITHDRAWS TO A DESERT PLACE—FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND—WALKS ON THE SEA—HEALS THE SICK AT CAPERNAUM—REBUKES THE INTERESTED MOTIVES OF HIS FOLLOWERS—URGES THEM TO SEEK THE "BREAD OF LIFE."



JUST about this time the birthday of Herod the tetrarch was celebrated with great festivity in the court of Galilee. On this occasion Herod was so much charmed with the dancing of young Salome (so Josephus calls her), the daughter, by her former husband, of that Herodias whom Herod had taken away from his brother Philip, that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she should ask. From the effect which this dancing produced upon the tetrarch, it would appear that it was not that simple style of dancing anciently used by Jewish maidens at public rejoicings; but that sort which, by the graceful movements of the body, expressed human manners and affections, and which had then lately been introduced from neighbouring nations into the Jewish court. The damsel was old enough to know the value of the promise thus given, and instead of giving utterance to any girlish wish, went to ask her mother concerning the suit which she should prefer. Herodias hated John the Baptist on account of the protest he had uttered against her connection with Herod, but had never been able to prevail upon the tetrarch to bring him to any further punish-

## JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED.

ment than imprisonment ; and she seized with avidity the occasion now offered, by instructing her daughter to make the barbarous demand of the head of the Baptist—"in a charger" (salver).

Herod was sorry that this demand should have been made, for he had a sort of awe for the Baptist, and justly dreaded the effect which such a deed might produce upon the people, by whom the prophet was held in high veneration. But as his oath had been taken in the presence of so many witnesses, he fancied that he could not draw back. The word was given ; John was beheaded in the prison where he had so long been confined, and his head was brought in a charger to Salome, who carried it to her mother. All the circumstances of this transaction are exceedingly revolting, and give a lively idea of an age in which blood was poured out like water, and when even "tender and delicate women" were familiar with all kinds of violence and with every ghastly form of death.

The people were greatly disgusted and provoked at the slaughter of John, and although they did not rise in sedition, as perhaps Herod had apprehended, Josephus informs us that they failed not to ascribe to this enormity the destruction of his fine army by Aretas, King of Arabia (the father of the tetrarch's former wife), which soon afterwards took place.

It was not long after this that the doings of Christ first came under the notice of Herod, and perplexed him greatly : "John," he said, "have I beheaded ; but who is this of whom I hear such things ?" Luke ix. 9. This implies doubt, and from the parallel account in Matt. xiv. 2, it would seem that he was at length led to conclude that Jesus was no other than the Baptist raised from the dead, and became very desirous to see him. Jesus probably heard of this ; and, if so, we may conclude that it was from the desire to avoid the court of Herod and the



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

snare of the tyrant, that he took ship and withdrew into the more solitary regions bordering the Lake of Tiberias. The need of rest and refreshment after the season of excessive fatigue to which he and his Apostles, who had by this time rejoined him, had been exposed, is also mentioned as a further reason for this retirement.

The desert place to which he withdrew was not far from the town of Bethsaida. The solitude which he sought was not, however, allowed him there. The people followed him, so that even in this solitary place he was soon surrounded by a great multitude. When Jesus beheld this large body of people, so far away from their homes in the wilderness, he was moved with compassion towards them, "because they were as sheep not having a shepherd;" and he ascended an eminence with his disciples, and he taught them many things. Then perceiving that the day was far spent, and that the people were exhausted with walking and want of food, while the places were so distant where food might be procured, Jesus said to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" This, we are told, he said to prove him, his own intentions having been already formed. But Philip had no idea of any other source of supply than the words of Jesus indicated, and the expense was the objection that rose to his mind:—"Two hundred denarii (about six pounds five shillings) worth is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little." But Andrew added, "There is a lad here who hath five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?" The only answer Christ made was to direct them to make the people sit down, in parties of fifty, upon the grass, which abounded in that place. This was done, and the whole number was then found to be about five thousand. Jesus then took the five loaves and two fishes, and,

## MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES.



Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes.

with his eyes cast towards heaven, he blessed this food, and broke it, delivering it as broken to the disciples, who distributed it to the people; and the supply was unexhausted until every one had received enough. Not only was there enough, there was surplus, there was abundance. For when he who could create this abundance, with just economy directed the fragments to be gathered up "that nothing might be lost," it was found that twelve baskets were required for the fragments of the loaves and fishes, which in their entire shape one basket would have contained.

This was in many respects the most convincing, if not in itself the greatest, miracle which Christ had yet performed. It accordingly had a corresponding effect upon the multitude, who said, "This is, of a truth, that prophet that should come into the world." Believing him to be the Messiah, they were disposed to constrain him to take the temporal sovereignty, which they conceived to belong to that character, and which he was manifestly reluctant to assume. Many have attained to thrones in this world with a less

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

promising beginning than the adhesion of five thousand men : and if Christ had any objects of worldly ambition, an opportunity which few would have neglected was here offered to him. But far different were the objects of his coming—far different the mission to the world with which he was charged. He therefore withdrew from the crowd, alone, into the mountains, while the disciples entered their boat and pushed off for Capernaum.

As night came on, the disciples were somewhat unpleasantly circumstanced. The night was very dark ; and the sea became rough, and the winds contrary.



Christ walking on the Sea.

They were, besides, without their Lord, and lacked the encouragements which his presence always brought to them. At length, in the dead of the night, they discerned dimly in the darkness an object moving towards them on the waters. Not being able to distinguish the form or features, they cried out with alarm, supposing that they beheld a spirit ; but immediately they heard the well-known voice of Jesus calling to them, "It is I ; be not afraid !" On hearing this, Peter, with the usual impul-

siveness of his character, said, "If it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water !" Jesus said, "Come !" and he went. Doddridge and some others, in explanation of what follows, suppose that Peter could swim, and that he ventured upon the sea with some secret dependence upon his art. It is certain that when he felt himself

## GENNESARETH.

upon the waters, with the waves high around him, his heart failed him, and as his faith departed, he began to sink. "While he believed, the sea was brass; when once he began to distrust, those waves were water." (Hall.) In this desperate case, he did the very best thing that could be done, he cried to Jesus for help—"Lord save me; I perish!" And Jesus saved him; he stretched forth his hand, and caught him, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" They then entered the vessel; which they had no sooner done than the wind went down. So strongly were the disciples impressed by these circumstances, that they came and worshipped him, saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God!"

They came to shore in the "Land of Gennesaret," in which the town of Capernaum was situated. It was then morning, and



Lake of Gennesareth, with the Town of Tiberias.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Christ being immediately recognised, he was soon attended by the usual crowd. Wherever he went, the news of his coming went before him, and all the sick were brought out hastily in their beds and laid in the streets through which he was to pass; and they who were so happy as but to touch the hem of his garment as he went by, were immediately cured of the diseases with which they were afflicted.

The morning after Christ had re-crossed the lake, the people who had partaken of the loaves and fishes, still continuing their search for him, concluded, from the absence of the vessel in which he had arrived, that he had taken his departure.

On this, so many of them as could find boats to convey them over, hastened across the lake after him. When they had found him at Capernaum, they asked, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" which he answered by reprehending them, as now seeking him only because they had received food for the body, and were now in hopes that he would exhibit new miracles for their benefit. Then, taking advantage of the state of consciousness which this accusation had produced, he urged them to seek that spiritual nourishment "the bread of life," which he only could bestow. The important discourse in which this view was enforced is continued in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel; and it is remarkable, beyond many other parts of the sacred narrative, for the effect produced on the hearers, who frequently interposed their objections, and who were so much offended at some of our Lord's sayings on this occasion, that many, even of the disciples, who had hitherto followed Jesus, left him and departed to their own homes. The chosen twelve, however, remained steady. When Christ pointedly asked them, "Will ye also go away?" Peter, in the name of the rest, answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the son of the living God."

## THE COASTS OF TYRE AND SIDON.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

CONVERSATION OF JESUS WITH THE SYRO-PHœNICIAN WOMAN—CURE OF THE DEAF AND DUMB—MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES REPEATED—THE BLIND CURED AT BETHSAIDA—CHRIST'S CONVERSATION WITH HIS DISCIPLES—PETER'S DECLARATION OF FAITH—OUR LORD'S CHARGE TO PETER—HIS SUBSEQUENT SEVERE REPROOF OF THAT APOSTLE.



It was now the time of the Passover, being the third Passover since the baptism of Jesus. But this year he did not go up to Jerusalem, knowing that the Jews of Judea only sought an occasion to put him to death. He, therefore, remained in Galilee with his disciples. He was not, however, allowed to carry on his proceedings unquestioned in Galilee, for certain adepts in the law came to

him from Jerusalem after the Passover, hoping to confound him with their objections; but they were only confounded in the attempt.

Soon after Jesus proceeded to that part of Phœnicia dependant upon Tyre and Sidon, which, as well as all the rest of Syria, was now under the dominion of the Romans. Here the inhabitants were chiefly Gentiles; but many Jews were settled among them, and they were, for Gentiles, unusually well acquainted with the Jews, and with their religion and habits of life. As it was not the object of Jesus to preach to the Gentiles, and he must have

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come hither chiefly for privacy, and to keep himself out of Herod's jurisdiction without going to Judea, he desired his disciples not to make him known. But "he could not be hid." The arrival in those parts of the famous Jewish prophet soon became known. One of the first to avail herself of his presence was a woman of the country, "whose daughter had an unclean spirit." This woman cast herself at his feet, beseeching him to heal her daughter. But he answered not a word. This



Prayer of the Syro-Phœnician Woman.

might have discouraged a less earnest and less believing soul. But she would not be refused. A mother's love urged her on. She followed, crying, "Have mercy on *me*!" although it was not for herself, but for her daughter, that she besought him: but in that daughter all the affections of her forlorn heart were garnered up, and, therefore, she implored mercy as for herself. Still Jesus heeded not; but the disciples, distressed by her importunity, came to him, and begged him to send her away by a favourable answer. But he answered, alluding to the relation

## THE DEAF AND DUMB RESTORED.

in which the covenant people stood to the rest of the world:—  
“It is not meet to take the children’s bread and to cast it to the dogs.” Overhearing this, the woman replied, “Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.” Jesus was moved at this, and answered, “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” The sacred historian adds, “And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”

Returning from Phœnicia towards the Sea of Galilee, a young man deprived of hearing and speech was brought to him to be cured. From the circumstance that he spoke as soon as his tongue was loosened, which if deaf and dumb from birth he could not have done without a distinct miracle, greater than even that of the cure, it is supposed that the youth had become deaf and dumb by disease or accident. Beholding him with pity, our Lord took him aside, from the gathering crowd; and then, touching his tongue, and putting his fingers into his ears, he raised his eyes to heaven in the act of mental prayer, and said, “Be opened.” At that word the string which had so long held the tongue in bondage was severed, and the ears, dead so long, became at once sensible of sound. He heard distinctly and spoke plainly. And the Lord then returned him to his rejoicing friends, who, although enjoined silence, could not control their gladness, but proclaimed the matter everywhere, saying, “He hath done all things well—he maketh the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.”

Some commentators remark that in the previous miracle Jesus by curing an idolatrous woman, and in this by curing one who, as being deaf and dumb, was an atheist, knowing nothing of any religion, showed he was the Saviour of the whole human race. This assumes that the youth had been born deaf and dumb: and,



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even so, there may still be a mistake, for do we not thus limit the grace of God, which can find entrance to the soul of man when all the ordinary avenues of human intercourse are shut up in silence or in darkness?

The people who had gathered around him at this time were so drawn on by their wonder at the miracles of mercy which they were constantly witnessing, that they followed about for three successive days. They became so much exhausted, that the benevolent Saviour was unwilling to dismiss them to their homes without food, "lest they should faint by the way." The recent



Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes.

miracle was therefore repeated. The whole multitude, numbering four thousand persons, was fed from seven loaves and a few small fishes, the gathered fragments of which filled seven baskets.

Immediately after this our Lord and his disciples took ship upon the Lake of Tiberias to the coasts of Magdala and Dalmanatha. On the passage the disciples were much concerned at discovering that they had neglected to bring with them a supply of bread.

## JESUS AT CÆSAREA PHILIPPI.

Christ at the same time began to caution them to beware of the "leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees." This was levelled at the hypocritical professions and self-exalting doctrines of these classes. But the disciples, with their minds pre-occupied with the want of bread, fancied that this discourse was aimed at their neglect. Jesus discerned this, and reproved them for their anxiety in this matter by reminding them of the recent miracles by which thousands had been abundantly fed.

They landed at Bethsaida, and Jesus, after curing a blind man at that place, proceeded to Cæsarea Philippi, which was out of Herod's jurisdiction, and in that of his brother Philip. Here he began to question the disciples respecting the opinions which they had heard of him. He was answered that some supposed that he was John the Baptist; some Elias; others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. "But whom," asked Jesus, "say *ye* that I am?" Peter, as usual, speaking for the rest, answered this important question by repeating the declaration which he had made on a former occasion: "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." This called forth from Jesus the memorable words—"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona [son of Jona]; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art PETER, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Without entering into the interpretations which have been given to this charge to Peter, it is important to mark out distinctly the important and formal declaration which preceded it, and is connected with it; because from that time our Lord began to

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speak openly of the mode in and by which the great objects of his coming were to be accomplished, namely, by his death on the cross, to be followed by his resurrection from the dead.

Much had already occurred to prepare the disciples for this; but having as yet no clear notion of our Lord's spiritual kingdom upon earth, they were much distressed at this declaration.

Peter, in his ardent attachment to his master, was more especially moved at what appeared to him an end so unworthy the glory of the Messiah, saying:—"Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." This interference drew from the mild Jesus one of the severest reproofs he ever uttered, and which is the more signal in connection with the encomium which he had lately passed on the high faith of this Apostle.



Faith. (Raffaello.)





The Transfiguration.—Overbeck.

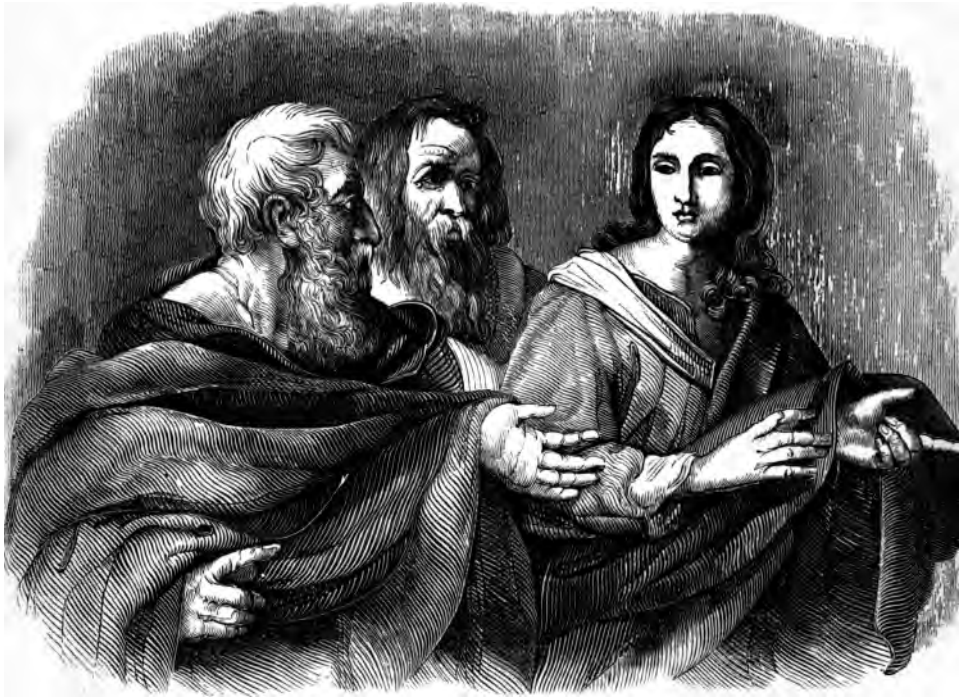
## THE TRANSFIGURATION.

### CHAPTER XIX.

THE TRANSFIGURATION—WITNESSED BY PETER AND JAMES AND JOHN—CURE OF THE DEMONIAK—PAYMENT OF TRIBUTE—MIRACLE ACCOMPANYING IT—AMBITION OF THE DISCIPLES REPROVED—PARABLE OF THE KING AND THE DEBTOR—OUR LORD SENDS FORTH SEVENTY OF HIS DISCIPLES—THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.



**A**BOUT eight days after this, our Lord, accompanied by his three most favoured apostles, Peter, James, and John, withdrew into the solitude of a mountain, supposed to be Mount Tabor, to pray. While they were there, the apostles were favoured with a glimpse of that heavenly glory in their Divine Master which belonged to his higher nature. “He was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” Suddenly there also appeared with him Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and were heard by the apostles to speak with him of the death he was soon to suffer in Jerusalem. There was a significance in this, which may escape a reader who is not informed that there was a general notion among the Jews that Moses and Elias were to appear on earth in the time of the Messiah. Peter, absorbed in the splendour of this appearance, and forgetful of life’s cares and troubles, cried out in a rapture, “Master, it is good to be here:—and let us make three tabernacles—one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.” By “tabernacles” he meant booths formed of branches of trees, such as travellers construct when they meet with a pleasant spot, unmindful of time and business. The



Peter, James, and John.—Caravaggio.

words had scarce been finished, when a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice was heard from out of the cloud, saying:—  
“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him.” Overpowered by the radiant light, and awed by that voice, the men fell to the ground as if struck by lightning; and they stirred not, until Jesus himself touched them and told them to arise. When they then looked up, they saw that no one but their Master was present, and he had resumed his usual appearance. He charged them to relate this glorious vision to no one, till the Son of Man should have risen from the dead: and they promised compliance, although they could not but question one another as to what his “rising from the dead” might mean.

## CURE OF THE DEAF AND DUMB.

On rejoining the other apostles below the mountain, they found them to be under much perplexity about a violent case of demoniacal possession, which, in the absence of their Master, they had attempted to relieve, but in vain. When the approach of Jesus was perceived, one man hastened out of the crowd to meet him, and kneeling down before him, explained the matter. He said, "Lord, have mercy on my son (for he is mine only child): for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And lo! a spirit taketh him and teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and



Cure of the deaf and dumb Youth.

pineth away; and I spake to thy disciples, that they should cast him out, and they could not." He added, that he had been thus affected from infancy. Christ then directed the lad to him, and no sooner did he appear in that august presence, than he fell into one of those violent convulsions of which the father had spoken, and who now implored more earnestly for relief: "If thou canst do anything, have compassion upon us, and help us." Jesus answered, "If thou canst believe—all things are possible to him



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

that believeth." The man replied, with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Touched by this answer, Jesus at once commanded the deaf and dumb spirit to come forth; and he was obeyed, though not without such rending throes as left the lad like one dead. Some, indeed, said that he was dead: but Jesus took him by the hand, lifted him up, and restored him perfectly cured to his amazed and rejoicing parent. The disciples afterwards took an opportunity of asking him why they could not effect this cure; and, as might be expected, he said that it arose from the defect of their faith: and from their want of sufficient confidence in the powers which he had bestowed upon them.

There was a sacred tribute paid yearly by every adult male in Israel to the treasury of the temple. The amount was half a shekel; and when the usual time of payment came round, the collectors at Capernaum inquired of Peter whether his master paid the tribute. He replied in the affirmative: but when he mentioned the matter to Jesus, he was asked: "What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?" Peter of course replied, "Of strangers;" and Jesus rejoined, "Then are the children free." But although thus free, he directed the tribute to be paid, that there might be no occasion to allege that he despised the temple. But they had not the money. The Saviour of the World was not possessed of fifteen pence. But all things were in his power and knowledge. He directed Peter to go and angle in the lake, and open the mouth of the first fish he took. The Apostle did so; and he found in the fish a coin of sufficient value to pay two tributes, and Christ directed Peter to pay with it for both.

When our Lord was afterwards with his disciples in the house which they occupied, he questioned them respecting a discussion in which they had been engaged on the road. But no one answered: .

## PARABLE OF THE KING AND THE DEBTOR.

all being ashamed to confess that they had been disputing which of them should be the greatest in their Master's kingdom, which they still conceived to be of this world. But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child into his arms, and told them that they who laid aside the pride of life, and became as gentle and teachable as little children, would be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord then declared the striking parable of the king who commanded an officer, owing ten thousand talents, to be sold, with his wife and children, for slaves, in payment of the debt: but was moved by his supplication to compassion, and forgave his vast debt.



Parable of the King and the Debtor.—Matt. xviii.

The same person, on going forth from the presence, found a fellow-servant who owed him the paltry sum of a hundred pence (*denarii*), and, instead of extending to him the mercy he had just received, seized him by the throat, and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. But this act was the ruin of the merciless creditor; for when his lord heard of it, he was angry, and, after administering a just rebuke, “delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

all that was due unto him." By this parable Christ taught that they who hoped forgiveness of heaven should be forgiving to one another. Soon after this, Christ sent forth seventy of his disciples, to spread abroad the tidings by which their own souls had been gladdened. In sending them forth, he enjoined them to manifest such earnestness and such freedom from small cares, as might make it plain to every passer-by that their minds were full of the most important business. They were not to encumber themselves with provisions or food or clothing, nor tarry by the way to exchange the long and ceremonious greetings for which the Orientals have always been notorious. For the same reason, Elisha gave the same injunction to Gehazi, when he sent him on a message intended to be speedily delivered.

It will be recollected that Jesus had abstained from attending at Jerusalem at the last Passover. Autumn had now come, and with it the pleasant Feast of Tabernacles. The "brethren" of Jesus perceiving that he manifested no intention to attend this feast either, urged him to do so. Their feeling in this is not difficult to discover. They, who had always had the human presence of Christ before their eyes, found it difficult to believe in him with entire fixedness. The miracles which they saw him perform inclined them to belief; but they were ever anxious to receive proofs yet more manifest of the divine dignity to which he laid claim. They now wished to see him in the great theatre of the metropolis; still expecting, probably, the arrival of a decisive moment in which he would reveal himself with power as the Messiah. This moment, they supposed, would come as soon as matters should be brought to a crisis by his appearance among his enemies at Jerusalem. Jesus, however, being unwilling to excite attention without necessity, did not consider the present moment, when the bulk of the people were in the road, as the most suitable.

## FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

He suffered his brethren to depart alone; but afterwards went up to the holy city in a private manner with his disciples.

At Jerusalem the expectations of the assembled multitudes were alive concerning him, and with different feelings men talked eagerly to one another about the probabilities of his appearance. At length Jesus arrived at the feast.



Feast of Tabernacles.—Freeman.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER XX.

CONDUCT OF OUR LORD AT JERUSALEM—THE PHARISEES SEND OFFICERS TO APPREHEND HIM—  
THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY—CURE OF A MAN BORN BLIND—PARABLE OF THE GOOD  
SHEPHERD—PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN—THE JOYFUL RETURN OF THE SEVENTY—  
TRUE CAUSE OF JOY.



**A**FTER the arrival of our Saviour at Jerusalem, he taught his doctrine in his usual manner, openly in the cloisters of the temple ; and people who knew how strongly the learned and priestly classes were irritated against him, felt some surprise that no one attempted to molest him. "His hour was not yet come," is the simple and abundantly satisfactory reason for this, which the Evangelist assigns.

On the last day of the feast, the Pharisees, who were in authority, did send officers to apprehend him as he taught in the temple ; for by that time they perceived that the current of popular opinion was setting in strongly in favour of his claims. Then said one to another, "When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than those which this man hath done?" Some averred, "Of a truth this is the Prophet (which Moses foretold)." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some objected, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" The officers sent by the Pharisees paused to hear his discourse, and were so impressed by





The Woman taken in Adultery. — Rubens.

## THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

his words that they made no attempt to arrest him, but returned to their employers, saying, "Never man spake like this man."

Jesus spent the night following in the Mount of Olives, which seems to have been his favourite resort when at Jerusalem. But the next morning found him early in the temple. His enemies then, according to a plan they had formed for ensnaring him, brought before him a woman taken in adultery, and required his judgment upon her case. The law of Moses commanded that an adulteress should be put to death; but they were sure that the merciful Jesus, who had always shown mercy to the humble and repentant sinner, would exercise favour towards the offender, and thereby convict himself as a despiser of the law. While they stood accusing the woman, Jesus traced characters on the ground, as people are apt to do when in deep meditation, and appeared to take no heed of what passed. But suddenly he raised himself, and said, "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone at her;" and then bent down again to the earth. The corruption of morals among the Jews of that time is notorious; and it is well known that many distinguished Rabbins of that period were living in adultery. All whom Jesus addressed might not have been *thus* guilty; but every one in whom the consciousness of guilt was once awakened would hesitate before he condemned others. This was the case with them. Touched to the quick by the answer of Jesus, they availed themselves of the abstraction, and slunk away till not one of them remained. Jesus then again raised himself, and perceiving that the woman alone remained, he said, "Woman, where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" She answered, "No man, Lord;" and he rejoined, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." To exercise the functions of a judge did not belong to him. So he dismissed



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

her without pronouncing sentence upon her past sins. He did not say that she was pardoned. But the whole conduct of Jesus,

so serious and so solemn, could not fail to make a deep impression upon one who, during the whole of the scene, must have felt it necessary to prepare for death.

Several of the discourses which our Lord subsequently delivered are preserved by St. John. In one of them he expressed Abraham's strong faith in the future Messiah, in the words, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day;

and he saw it, and was glad." Grossly misunderstanding this of an earthly intercourse with Abraham, they exclaimed, "Thou



Repentance.—Flaxman.



The Jews casting stones at Jesus.

### THE WELL OF SILOAM.

art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" And his answer, "Before Abraham was, I am," so enraged them, that they took up stones to cast at him ; but he evaded their assault, and left the place.

There was a poor beggar, blind from his birth, who was well known in the streets of Jerusalem. This man's eyes Jesus



Well of Siloam.—Forbin.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

anointed with clay, and then sent him to wash them in the Pool of Siloam. Instead of deriding means of themselves so inefficient, the man obeyed, and he returned from the pool with the perfect use of both his eyes. This cure upon a person so well known excited more attention than any other miracle which Christ had yet performed. The man was closely questioned, and even his parents were examined as to the previous state of his eyes. But finding no flaw in this great act, they told the man, "Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner." To which he very properly replied, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I cannot tell; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind now I see." His other answers to their questions were so sharp, so much to the purpose, and evinced so much grateful feeling towards his healer, that the questioners became exasperated, and "cast him out," or passed a sentence of excommunication upon him. When Jesus heard this, he sought him out, and when he met with him, asked, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in him?" And when Jesus said, "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee;" he immediately answered, "Lord, I believe;" and rendered worship to his deliverer.

After this, in order of time, follow several important discourses of Christ. One of them contained the beautiful parable of the Good Shepherd, followed soon after by that of the Good Samaritan.

The last of these parables arose in discourse with a Pharisee, who, having stated that the great commandments of the law were—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;"—was told, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." But he, being willing to justify himself in the narrow construction which he and all other Jews of his class put upon the latter duty, asked,



Christ curing the Blind.



## THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

“And who is my neighbour?” To which Jesus answered by this parable, if it be right to describe as a parable an incident real in all its circumstances, and which might have happened on any day.

It describes a man as “*going down*” from Jerusalem to Jericho, which stands on a plain many hundred feet below the level of Jerusalem, and the road to which lay in part through a rocky wilderness, which was in those days (as Josephus tells us) more beset by robbers than any other road in Palestine. This man was attacked by thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, which is at this day almost always done by Eastern robbers, because the loose clothes of the Orientals can be worn by almost any person of average stature into whose hands they come. And they not only stripped him, but as he had made some resistance,



Jericho.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

they handled him so severely, that he lay by the road-side half dead with wounds and bruises. Jericho was then a great station



The Good Samaritan.

for the Priests, and Priests and Levites were continually passing on the road to and from Jerusalem. A priest, who had been at Jerusalem offering up prayers for the safety of the people, came hard upon the wounded man on his return home; “but when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.” Soon after a Levite passed on his way to Jerusalem: he stopped, and even drew nigh and looked upon the poor wretch; but he also went on without rendering assistance to one whom he could not but have recognised as a Jew, and as such a “neighbour,” to whom the law required him to show mercy. Next came a Samaritan, one of the people between whom and the Jews a great enmity existed. But he paused not to consider this. Although in haste, and on horseback, he instantly alighted; and hastened to comfort him with wine, and to mollify his stiffening sores with oil. He then placed him carefully upon his own beast,

### CHRIST EXHORTING HIS DISCIPLES.

and led him tenderly to the nearest caravanserai or inn, where he left him in charge of the keeper to provide for his wants, with the words, "Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee."

When he had concluded this parable, Jesus pointedly asked the questioner, "Which now of these three thinkest thou was neighbour to him that fell among thieves?" He could not but answer, "He that showed mercy on him;" to which our Lord rejoined, "Go thou and do likewise."



Christ exhorting his Disciples.

About this time the seventy disciples returned to their Master from the mission on which they had been sent. "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name," was their exulting report to him. He replied, "Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you." But to repress in them all pride and conceit in these preternatural gifts, and to correct the notion that these formed their greatest honour, he



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

added—"Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." The future life is here brought forward under the image of an earthly commonwealth, in which the names of citizens were inscribed in a book, from which were occasionally expunged the names of those who were thought unworthy, and who thereby lost their civil rights. The image which ascribes such a book to God is frequent in the Old Testament, and is not rare in the New.



The Good Shepherd

## A CURE ON THE SABBATH DAY.

### CHAPTER XXI.

CURE OF THE INFIRM WOMAN ON THE SABBATH DAY—INDIGNATION OF THE JEWS—CHRIST DINES WITH THE PHARISEE—REPROVES THOSE WHO SEEK THE HIGHEST PLACE—PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER—PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP—PARABLE OF THE LOST PIECE OF SILVER—PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.



HERE was soon another opportunity for our Lord to correct the notions concerning the Sabbath which in his time were entertained. He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day, when he noticed the presence of a woman who was doubled up by a disease under which she had been suffering for eighteen years. He called the afflicted creature before him, and when he laid his sacred hands upon her, her bent body became straight, and she glorified God. The ruler of the synagogue was filled with indignation by this act, which he regarded as a profanation of the holy day; and he said to the people: "There are six days on which men ought to work: in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." The severe answer of the benevolent Saviour rebuked him for thinking it a matter of small importance that the afflicted should be relieved one day sooner from their sorrows. "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath day loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to the watering; and ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" No one could answer this.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Soon after, our Lord took occasion to compare the small beginnings and final extension of "the kingdom of God," meaning the church, to a grain of mustard seed, "which a man took and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree, and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. He again compared it to leaven "which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened." These familiar comparisons, certain to be remembered, were prophetic in their purport, and would be called to mind with much interest, when the result had been realized—when the seed became a great tree, and when the morsel had leavened the whole mass.

It was probably on the next Sabbath that Christ dined in the house of a Pharisee, and took notice of the manifest anxiety of the guests to secure the most honourable places. This is, at the present day, a matter of vast solicitude and importance among the Orientals, the rank and estimation of a man being determined by the place which he occupies. Among the Jews there were frequent disputes about seats at a banquet. Jesus, with the freedom which belonged to his character and office, reproved this practice, and declared the superior merits of those who feasted the afflicted and needy over those who bestowed their feasts only on those from whom they expected a corresponding return. He does not in this prohibit mutual hospitality among the rich; but he prefers the acts of kindness which are performed without the hope of reward. Some one on this remarked, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," by which he probably intended to express the blessedness of those who should live in the kingdom which he believed the Messiah was to establish on the earth. To this Jesus replied in the striking parable of the Great Supper, showing that the event which they, in prospect, regarded as a period so full of blessing to themselves, would, when present, be exceedingly

## PARABLE OF THE SUPPER.

neglected and despised. The parable describes a person as making a good supper to which a large number of friends were invited. When all things were ready, the servants were, according to custom, sent to *call* the persons previously invited. But they all excused themselves on one ground or another. One said he



Parable of the Supper.

had bought (conditionally) a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it; and another, that he had bought five yoke of oxen, and must go and prove them. These excuses allude to a custom of proving articles during a treaty for their purchase. Another alleged that he had “married a wife, and therefore could not come.” These excuses might be very good separately taken, and on their own merits; but agreement among all the guests to excuse themselves showed much disrespect for the host, and a disposition to undervalue him and the feast which he had provided. And thus he felt it; for he was wroth, and commanded his servants to bring in from the streets and highways the destitute, the afflicted, the

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

poor, and the miserable, that *they* might enjoy the feast which the invited guests had refused. The application of this parable is obvious, and must have been exceedingly galling to the auditors.

Not long after this, Christ, finding that he had incurred the sneers of the Pharisees, on account of the number of "publicans and sinners," who flocked to hear him, explained and justified his conduct in several striking parables. In the first, he describes a man possessing a flock of a hundred sheep, and when one of them has gone astray, proceeds in search of it, and when it was found, lays it on his shoulders (after a custom of the Jewish shepherds which is still common in the East), and returns home exulting more in the one sheep he had recovered than in the ninety and nine which he had not lost.

The next parable has the same scope. In it a woman possessed of ten pieces of silver loses one of them, and proceeds to light a candle, and sweeps the house, searching diligently till she has found it; and when it is found, rejoicing more in that one piece than in the possession of the nine which had not been lost.

The parable of the Prodigal Son, which next follows, has the same general purport with the others, teaching that God would have no one perish, but willingly receives those who repent of their sins, and grants them his forgiveness. In this beautiful parable, which has all the air of a fact from common life, and which might easily be such, our Lord represents a wealthy landholder having two sons. The younger of them, full of animal spirits, and impatient of the restraints of his father's house, obtains from him his share of the patrimony, and hastens away to a distant place, where he may take his fill of sensual pleasures without notice or control. Soon, all his ample means were wasted in riotous living, "and he began to be in want." At the same time a famine arose in the land; the gay companions of his pleasures departed from him, and he





The Repentant Prodigal.—Salvator Rosa.

## THE PRODIGAL SON.

had no resource but to hire himself out as a swineherd to “a citizen of that country.” The famine made provisions scarce and dear, so that very often he would fain have appeased his appetite with the coarse fruits of the carob tree, which were given to his hogs, and which none but the poorest of human beings eat.



The Carob Tree.

Thus degraded, thus miserable, the youth at length “came to himself,” for he had been morally insane before: and then he thought of the blessings of his father’s house, the hired servants in which had bread enough and to spare, while he was perishing with hunger. This brought him to the resolution—“I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.”

He did as he had said. When he drew nigh to his father’s house, he doubtless considered much of the manner in which he should make his approach: but he needed not; for his father, with



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.



The Prodigal's Return.

the true instinct of paternal love, knew the wretched prodigal “while he was yet a great way off;” and he was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. The son began to confess his unworthiness; but the only answer of the father was to tell his servants—“Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.”

In the height of their rejoicing, the elder brother [representing the Pharisees] came in from the fields; and when he understood the cause of this unwonted gladness, he was offended, and would not enter the house; and when his father came out to him he complained that, while his faithful services and steady conduct had obtained no reward, no sooner did his wasteful brother return, than the fatted calf had been killed for him. The glad father answered, “Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It

### THE UNJUST STEWARD.

was meet that we should make merry and be glad ; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again ; and was lost, and is found."

Jesus then addressed more particularly to his own disciples, many of whom were wealthy, the parable of the Unjust Steward, with the view of teaching the true use of riches, and how they might be employed so as to ensure advantage from them in a future state. As, however, the parable describes a dishonest contrivance of the steward to gratify his lord's debtors at his expense, that they might thereby be induced to support him when dismissed from his stewardship ; the moral, or application, is to be adduced, not from the act itself, which was culpable, but from the anxiety which the man felt to make his present means available for his future good.

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## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER XXII.

PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS—DISCOURSES OF OUR LORD WITH HIS DISCIPLES  
—CURE OF THE TEN LEPERS—PARABLE OF THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW.



HEN followed the grand and somewhat mysterious parable of the rich man and Lazarus. It represents a wealthy and luxurious personage, "clad in purple," which, although originally confined to royal and noble personages, was, in the time of Christ, affected by the rich and opulent; "and in fine linen," which, being in those days used chiefly by women, was regarded as effeminate. The portal or porch of a great man's house was a usual resort of beggars; and at the rich man's gate was daily laid a beggar named Lazarus (*helpless*), who, as often happens with persons in his wretched condition, was "full of sores," the result of some cutaneous disorder brought on by hard fare and dirt. He was thus brought to the rich man's gate, that he might be fed from the crumbs that fell from his table. This, it seems, he obtained from the servants, but nothing from the rich man himself—no kind inquiry, no notice, no attempt to alleviate his condition—although he must daily have observed this miserable object as he went in and out. How great that misery was, which this rich man deigned not to notice, is shown by the fact that the street dogs came and licked the sores of

## THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.



Lazarus at the Gate.

Lazarus, which shows that they were open sores, and that they were not “bound up, nor mollified with ointment.”

In course of time the rich man and the poor man died; and then their conditions were reversed. Lazarus—poor no more, no more full of sores—“was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom,” that is, to the society of Abraham in Heaven; while the rich man lay in fiery torments afar off. In this painful condition he implored that Lazarus might be sent with one drop of water to cool his parched and burning tongue. Abraham replied, “Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.” Abraham also pointed to the obstacle which existed in the “great gulf,” impassable to either party, which lay between them. On hearing this, the wretched soul’s thoughts then took another direction, and he implored Abraham to send Lazarus to his five brethren, still living in his father’s house (which implies that he had himself died young), to warn them, lest they also

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

came to that place of torment. Abraham said, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them." But the other urged, "Nay, father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they will repent;" a common but most erroneous belief, to which Abraham answered, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." As Doddridge remarks, "The impenitence of many who saw another Lazarus raised from the dead, John xi. 47, and the wickedness of the soldiers who were eye-witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, and yet that very day suffered themselves to be hired to bear a false testimony against it, Matt. xxviii. 11—15, are most affecting and astonishing illustrations of this truth."

After this our Lord addressed his disciples in sundry discourses, in which he taught them to avoid giving cause of offence, and to be forgiving and merciful to one another, even under repeated provocation. The disciples then, having been taught so much respecting charity and benevolence towards men, expressed a desire to be taught also concerning faith towards God, of which he had so often spoken to them, and that they might have more of that faith imparted to them, to which he had said all things were possible. To their remarkable words, "Increase our faith," he replied, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine (sycamore) tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." Expressions like this, denoting physical impossibilities, were common among the Hebrews; but that of Christ must be viewed reverently, as denoting the vast and mysterious power of faith.

It seems that our Lord had returned from Jerusalem to Galilee, where some of the above transactions occurred, for we

## THE TEN LEPERS.

next read that he is again about to journey to Jerusalem, Luke xvii. 11, probably to attend the Feast of Dedication. As his object was to preach the Gospel on his journey, he sent messengers before him as he went through Galilee and Samaria ; and no doubt the intelligence of the coming of the prophet of Nazareth drew large audiences to hear his utterances and to witness his miracles. Once they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him ; but, as he was on the way to one of the feasts, they refused to receive him. The annual festivals at Jerusalem were odious to this people, who believed that they ought to be celebrated at their own temple on Mount Gerizim ; and the Feast of Dedication was particularly disliked by them, as it was of human institution, and they recognised no festivals or observances but such as Moses had established. This refusal awakened the indignation of the two sons of Zebedee—those “Sons of Thunder”—and they said, “Wilt thou that we command fire to come down out of heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?” But he turned and rebuked them, saying, “The Son of Man is come not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”

At another village ten men who were lepers heard with joy of the approach of one by whom so many of their afflicted brotherhood had been made whole. Not being allowed to enter towns, or to mix with sound men, they stood afar off, outside the town, and as the Saviour drew nigh, they cried loudly, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” A cry for mercy was never heard by him in vain. Yet he did not immediately heal them, but, to try their faith, sent them to show themselves for examination by the priest, intending that they should be healed on the way. Believing that he could heal them, even when already gone, they turned their steps with glad hearts towards the holy city, and accordingly they were

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

perfectly cured as they proceeded on their way. It is easy to conceive with Bishop Hall, "what an amazed joy there was among these lepers when they found themselves thus suddenly cured: each tells other what a change he feels in himself; each comforts other with the assurance of his outward clearness; each congratulates other's happiness, and thinks, and says, 'How joyful this news will be to their friends and families!'" They hastened on their way to show themselves to the priest and claim the certificate of recovery, which would restore them to the society of men and to the pleasant intercourse of life. There was among them one only whose grateful emotions overcame for the moment even this



The Leper kneeling to Christ.

natural desire, and he, returning to thank his deliverer, proved to be a Samaritan. Jesus could not but remark on this circumstance. He said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"

Soon after this, some of the Pharisees took occasion to question him when the kingdom of God would come,—meaning, doubtless,

## THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW.

the manifestation of the Messiah as a conqueror and king. He told them in reply, that the Son of Man would not come with any of the external show and pomp which they expected. He then more particularly addressed his own disciples, and warned them of the impostors which should hereafter arise, claiming to be the Messiah, and seducing many to follow them to their ruin. Then, in many striking comparisons, he illustrated the suddenness and effect of his coming to execute judgment upon the nation from which he was about "to suffer many things." "As it was in the days of Noah," he said, "so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."

From this, by a natural transition, he passed to enjoin the importance of constant prayer and entire reliance on the divine assistance, in the parable of the Importunate Widow, who day after day urged an unjust and impious judge to do her justice upon her adversary. She could not obtain attention upon the merits of her case or from his compassion; but at length he did her the justice she required, only to release himself from her continual applications. "And," said Jesus, "shall not God," the just and merciful, who does not despise, but love "his own elect," repel all injury from them, even though he seem for a while regardless of their prayers?



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN—JESUS IS ENTERTAINED AT BETHANY—DIFFERENT CONDUCT OF MARTHA AND MARY—OUR LORD VISITS THE REGION OF THE JORDAN—A SEASON OF REPOSE—ILLNESS AND DEATH OF LAZARUS—MARTHA AND MARY SEND TO JESUS—HE RETURNS TO BETHANY—LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD—HOSTILITY OF THE JEWS.



Publican and Pharisee.

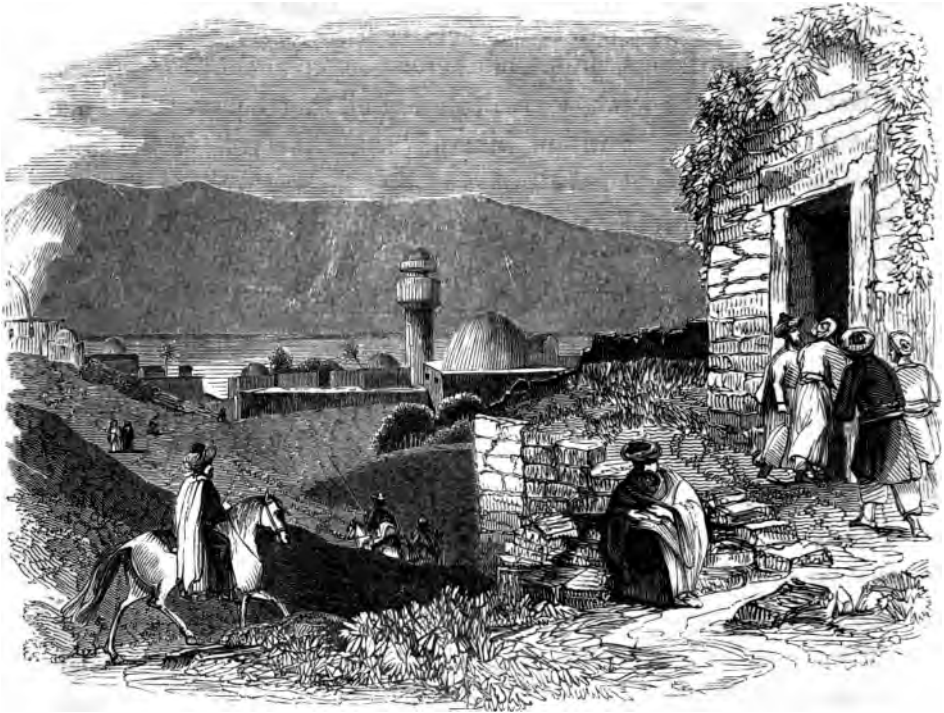


JESUS having thus taught the importance and use of urgent prayer, proceeded to show by another parable the spirit in which prayer should be offered. Two men went up to the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, the other a Publican. They both stood, no other posture being allowed in public prayer, except to kings, who were not forbidden to sit. But the Pharisee stood wrapt in himself, and said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other

## MARTHA, MARY, AND LAZARUS.

men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers—or even as *this Publican*. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” This he said silently, or “within himself,” since the rest of the congregation, who might have supposed that he was praying for the welfare of the people, would have been justly offended if they had known that he was only speaking evil of others. In his unuttered words he claimed a righteousness beyond the law, and rested with proud confidence upon it. The fasting twice in the week was not required by the law, but was observed by Pharisaic devotees; the tithe of *all* that he possessed was not exacted by the law, but was minutely and rigidly enforced by the Pharisees. In this confidence of a claim on heaven, the Pharisee had planted himself in the interior of the temple near the sanctuary; but the Publican humbly stood afar off in the outer borders of the temple court, “and would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’” “I tell you (added Jesus) that *this* man went down to his house justified rather than the other.”

It was not on the road from Galilee to Jerusalem, as some suppose, that Jesus was hospitably entertained in the house of Martha. She lived at Bethany, quite in an opposite quarter; which shows that our Lord early visited the place after his arrival at Jerusalem; and perhaps lodged there, returning daily to the city, Bethany being only just on the other side of the Mount of Olives. Martha appears to have been a widow, with whom lived her sister Mary, and her brother Lazarus. With this family our Lord was very intimate, and Lazarus, in particular, was favoured with his friendship and love. They were all rejoiced to see him again: and Martha, “on hospitable thoughts intent,” busied herself in preparing for the entertainment of him and his disciples. This was *her* way of showing her regard for Christ;



Bethany.

but her sister Mary chose rather to remain near him, that she might not lose the opportunity of profiting by his heavenly instructions, and that the gracious words which fell from him might not be lost to her.

The task which Martha had imposed upon herself of providing for so large a party, suddenly arrived, was heavy, and its hurry and solicitude made her regard the course taken by her sister as idleness, and as neglect of a matter in which Christ and the friends he had brought with him were essentially concerned. Confident that Jesus must view it in the same light, and must fully appreciate her bustling care for his entertainment, she ventured to complain to him, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that

## THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN.

she help me." But how much was she astonished to hear him answer, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about *many* things; but *one* thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." She could not but understand this pointed contrast of the many cares of this life, with that *one* matter of infinite concern to man—the salvation of his soul.

During the feast, Jesus held that discourse with the Jews in Solomon's Porch, wherein he declared that his works alone sufficiently proved him to be the Son of God, to all whose hearts were not hardened, as theirs were, in unbelief, John x. 22—39. He set this point so strongly before them, that they thought they had ground on which to proceed against him, and therefore sought to apprehend him; but he escaped their hands, and departed from Jerusalem.

When the feast was ended, our Lord left Jerusalem; but, instead of returning to Galilee, he went beyond the Jordan, to the place where John at first baptized, and remained there for some time. He was here in a neighbourhood the people of which had heard much of the Baptist's instructions, and had witnessed his course of proceeding; and the presence of Jesus reminded them, and many others who flocked to him, of the testimony which John himself, whose memory they venerated, had here borne to Christ. They considered that John had wrought no miracles, and yet many had been disposed to regard him as the Messiah; how much, then, were they bound to recognise the Messiah in Jesus, who had wrought so many miracles, and to whom John himself had borne his most distinct testimony. The people were thus predisposed to believe in him; and many, moved by the testimony of John and by his own discourses, did receive him as the expected Messiah. Among this well-

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

disposed people, the Saviour of men spent some portion of the last four months of his life. It was one of those seasons of repose which we often note to occur in the history of men, before they come to the great and crowning struggle of their lives, and which even the Redeemer did not deem it unfit to enjoy before he entered upon the tremendous scenes of that "hour" which he had so often said was not yet come; but which he knew to be now nigh at hand.

Jesus was still at this place, when Martha and Mary, by whom he had lately been entertained at Bethany, sent to acquaint him with the alarming illness of their brother Lazarus, in the words, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." When Jesus heard this, he did not, as the sisters probably expected, hasten at once to the relief of his friend; but sent back the answer, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." The Evangelist adds, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus," as if designedly to point our attention to the seemingly unaccountable conduct of Jesus in remaining still for two days in the place without apparent notice of the tidings which had been brought to him. After that, Jesus made known to the disciples his intention to return into Judea. They, knowing how lately his life had been sought at Jerusalem, could not conceal the astonishment they felt at this intelligence. He then said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." But perceiving that they understood him to speak literally of sleep, he said more plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless, let us go unto him." So convinced were the disciples that, from the exasperated feeling of the Jews, this journey would end in the death of their master, that they followed him as men prepared for that result, and ready to die with him.

## DEATH OF LAZARUS.

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had been already four days in the grave; and many of the Jerusalem friends of the family were present in the place, having come over (the distance being but two miles) to comfort Martha and Mary. The bereaved sisters were now informed of the Lord's approach. It is curious to observe the characteristic difference of behaviour in the two sisters on this interesting occasion. The ever active Martha immediately arose and hastened forth to meet the Saviour, while Mary remained quiet in her grief. The sight of her Lord awakened in Martha the assurance of faith, which had perhaps, under the circumstances, been somewhat weakened; and she cried passionately, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;" in which words it is even possible to detect a half-formed wish to ask that he would raise him from the dead. Jesus answered vaguely, as if to lay open the state of her heart, "Thy brother shall rise again;" and not receiving so direct an answer as she perhaps expected, Martha was again dejected, and answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day;" which seems to imply that this was a truth too general to satisfy her. Jesus answered, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." That in thus directing her attention to the inner life, and to the life beyond the grave, Christ doubtless intended to rebuke gently her too unsubdued grief, is shown by the pointed question, "Believest thou this?" And sorrow and shame permitted the troubled Martha only to answer, "Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

She then went to fetch Mary, who no sooner heard that Jesus desired her presence, than she arose and went with her sister. The communication had been private, and her friends, who saw

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

her hastily quit the house, supposed that a sudden impulse of sorrow had led her forth to weep at her brother's grave, and they followed after her. Jesus had not yet entered the town, probably to avoid exciting too much attention, and perhaps also that he might go at once to the grave; the burying grounds being outside of the city or town, as is still customary among the Orientals.

Then Mary threw herself at his feet, and said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died!" When Jesus witnessed her tears, and the grief of the friends of Lazarus, who had followed her, he "groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." He asked, "Where have ye laid him?" and, on beholding the grave of one to whom he was so much attached, Jesus wept. This display of natural emotion extorted from some of the Jews present the remark, "Behold how he loved him!" to which others added, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" Heedless of these remarks, Jesus commanded the stone which closed the mouth of the sepulchre to be removed. The wealthy Jews had their graves in sepulchres hewn out of rocks, to which there were passages leading, and on each side of which niches or openings were cut in which the bodies of the dead were deposited. The stone at the entrance was never removed at the usual visits to the sepulchre, and only on extraordinary occasions. Martha, who now had lost all hope of recovering her brother, attempted to dissuade him from his supposed intention of entering the tomb, by observing that the corpse would by this time emit a tainted odour. Jesus answered, in slight reproof, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God?" The stone was then removed; and Jesus cried aloud, "Lazarus, come forth." And the dead heard him. The grave could no longer hold the man whom he called



Raising of Lazarus.—Piombo.





## ALARM OF THE SANHEDRIM.

from it. Lazarus came forth, still wearing the bandages or grave-clothes in which the Hebrews enveloped the dead. These seem to have been wrapped around the limbs separately, as they did not prevent the movement which the Lord commanded.

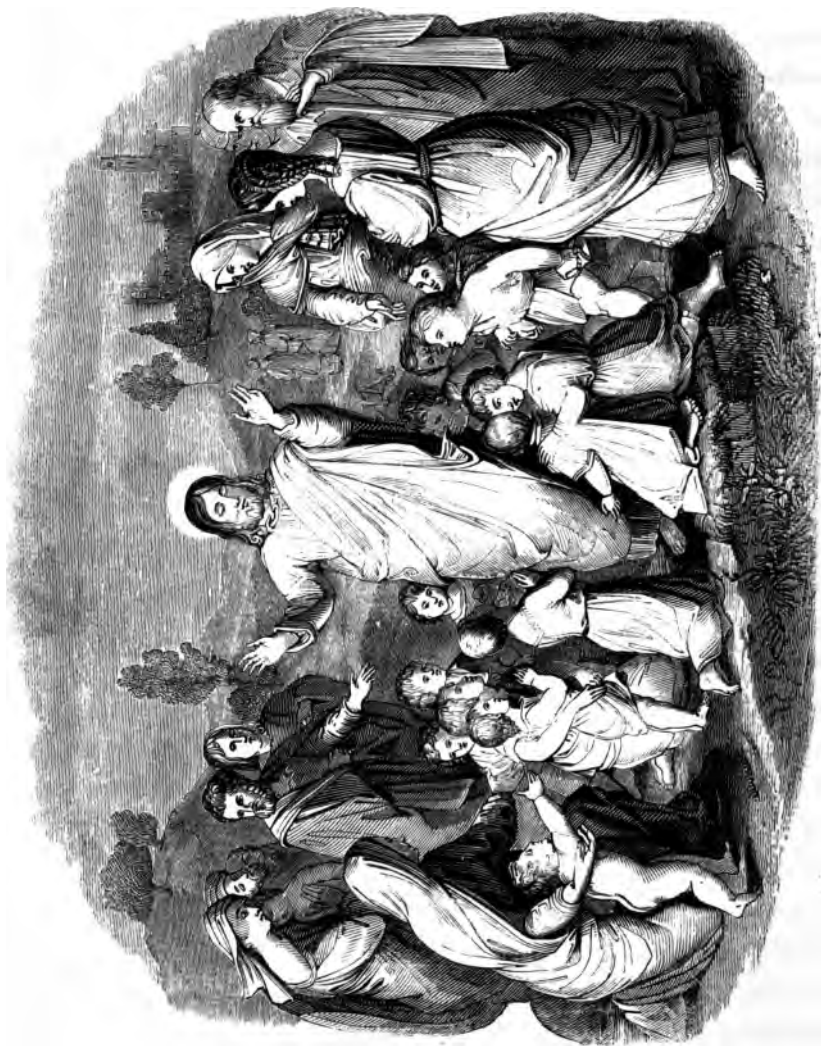
The mixed emotions with which the re-appearance of one so many days dead affected the sisters and friends of Lazarus and the disciples of Jesus, we must leave to the imagination of the reader. The act was too stupendous not to draw general attention, and, in the actual state of public feeling towards Christ, to be attended with important consequences. It was also performed in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis, and upon a person who appears to have been well known. Most of the Jews present, overcome by this exhibition of Divine power, believed in Jesus as the Messiah: but there were some whose sense being alienated from Divine things, would not acknowledge it, but went away and gave a perverted account of the transaction to the Sanhedrim. This assembly, the high spiritual council of the Jews, held its meetings in the stone hall of the temple, and, when full, consisted of seventy-one members, although twenty-three sufficed for the transaction of business. The council was much alarmed at the report of the resurrection of Lazarus. They could not deny that Jesus ("*this man*," as they contemptuously described him) had actually wrought miracles; but in their exasperation and prejudice against one who taught doctrines so opposite to their own practices and expectations, they allowed this circumstance to weigh little with them. But this conviction obliged them to take a fresh ground for their hostility against him. If his party prevail, they said, he will excite political commotions, which will result in bringing down upon us the deprivation of the privileges which the Romans have left to us. This was probably no other than a mere pretext for the course they then began to

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

contemplate; for the purpose of silencing the minority in the Sanhedrim which thought favourably of Jesus, and which had already caused its voice to be heard. It is impossible that this view could have been taken in sincerity; for Jesus never affected an earthly kingdom, or inculcated any principles likely to lead to revolt or tumult: whereas the Jews themselves desired nothing better than to find in the Messiah one who would have led them on to shake off the hateful yoke of the Romans; and if Jesus had appeared in that character, would have received him and followed him. It was now, however, determined to lose no time in bringing about the death of Jesus, on the ground which had thus been taken; and in regarding their ensuing conduct as the effect of this design, the reader will be better able to apprehend the connection of the incidents which compose the closing scenes of the Redeemer's life.

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Christ and little Children.—Overbeck.

## JESUS IN RETIREMENT.

### CHAPTER XXIV.

JESUS WITHDRAWS INTO RETIREMENT—CHILDREN BROUGHT TO CHRIST—PARABLE OF THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD—THE PASSOVER DRAWS NIGH—JESUS SETS OUT FOR JERUSALEM—FEARS OF HIS DISCIPLES—ARRIVAL AT JERICO—ZACCHEUS—PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.



JESUS, being aware of the evil design, withdrew with his disciples to Ephraim, a small city a few miles to the east of Jerusalem, in what was called the wilderness of Judea, John xi.; whence he is supposed, from Matt. xix. 1, to have soon returned to the parts beyond the Jordan from which he had lately come. Here, as usual, he was attended by large numbers of people, whom he taught, and by the diseased whom he healed. He was here among a well-disposed people; and on one occasion many mothers brought their children that he might bestow his blessing upon them.

Jesus had been speaking against the practice of divorce, which was then very common among the Jews; and the disciples, being apparently anxious to put some questions to him on a subject which interested them greatly, were disposed to repel the women and their children in the attempt to approach him. They may also have feared lest their master, who was engaged in so great a crowd, might be too much harassed. But the benign Saviour

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

called to them, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He then took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Then, or soon after, our Lord illustrated the proposition, "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first," by the striking parable of the householder who early in the morning went out into the market-place to hire labourers for his vineyard; and agreed with them for the wages of a denarius (about seven-pence halfpenny) a day. At the third hour he hired others, promising to give them what was right; and so again at the sixth hour, the ninth hour, and even the eleventh hour. When they came to be paid, those who were hired last received a denarius; on which those who had been first hired and had laboured all the day expected to receive more.



Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard.

But the master reminded them of their contract for the day's wages, and asserted his own right to make the last comers equal to them in the reward of labour. By this, Jesus appears to have

## THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE.

taught that ardour of intention and singleness of motive will often make the labour of one hour as valuable, in a moral point of view, as the ordinary labour of an entire day.

The time of the Passover now drew nigh, and Jesus set forth for Jerusalem, much to the consternation of the disciples, who expected the worst results from the hostility and known designs of the council. But he told them plainly that his hour was now nigh at hand :—"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the chief priests and to the Scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." This they did not then understand. They understood the facts as stated. They could not misunderstand them; but they expected that the reign of the Messiah on earth with which their minds were filled would commence after this resurrection. This is shown by the petition which two, certainly not the least intelligent of Christ's apostles, namely, the sons of Zebedee, set their mother upon asking of him—"Grant that my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom." This amounted to a request that they might enjoy the first and second place among the subjects of his earthly kingdom, the degree of dignity being in Oriental courts denoted by proximity to the throne. Jesus, knowing that the application originated with James and John themselves, who had personally made a similar request at a former time, addressed them rather than their mother, saying, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I shall be baptized with?" They answered promptly, "We are able." And he told them that they should indeed drink of his cup and be



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

baptized with his baptism ; but that the first and second places in his kingdom were not his to give. The ten other apostles felt much anger at this application by Zebedee's sons ; but their master soothed them by pointing out the qualities by which true greatness in his kingdom were to be obtained. The transaction is of importance as showing the entire misconception concerning the nature of our Lord's kingdom under which the apostles still laboured. Their views as to the actual reign were not very different from those which others entertained ; but they believed that Jesus was indeed the Messiah by whom these views were to be brought out. They also had modified notions as to the manner of his reign ; for there can be no doubt that they applied to the conduct of his temporal kingdom much which he intended to apply, and which we now apply, to his kingdom in the souls of men. It was left for a future day to correct all their erroneous notions, and to make plain all that they had previously misunderstood.

On arriving at Jericho, which was then the second city of Judea, the people gathered in crowds to see him pass. Among them was the chief of the tax-gatherers, named Zaccheus, who being too short to see him in the crowd, and yet eager to view one of whom he had heard so much, mounted a sycamore-tree for the purpose. Jesus when he came to the place looked up, and called to him by name, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down ; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Overwhelmed by this unexpected honour, he left the tree and hastened home to receive his great guest, who alone of all the holy men of his age did not despise even the publicans. The mob as usual murmured at this preference ; but Zaccheus, in the fulness of his heart and of his awakening convictions, stood forth and declared that from that hour he would bestow half his wealth to feed the poor, and would

### THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

restore fourfold the wrong which any man could lay to his charge.

It was on this occasion that our Lord delivered the celebrated parable of the Talents. In those days, any person having claims by descent or interest to the sort of rayless crown which the Romans allowed some of their great vassals to wear, proceeded to Rome to have it confirmed to him. This had been done by Archelaus, the last native prince who had ruled in Judea. Jesus thus represents "a certain nobleman" as making such a journey "to receive for himself a kingdom and to return;" and before his departure, confiding different sums of money to his servants, that they might employ it for his advantage till his return. They who had doubled the amount by trade during his absence were rewarded with high trusts when he came back. But one of them, who had received one talent and had laid it up for safety, now produced it unimproved, and was met by reproaches, and sent away with disgrace.

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## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER XXV.

CURE OF THE BLIND MAN—JESUS ARRIVES AT BETHANY—MARTHA AND MARY—THE BOX OF PRECIOUS OINTMENT—AVARICE OF JUDAS—OUR LORD'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.



ON leaving the city the next morning, a blind man, who sat begging by the way side, hearing the noise of the passing crowd, inquired what it meant; and being told that Jesus of Nazareth was going by, began to cry out in his loudest voice, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me," till the Saviour heard him and stopped. When he was told of this, the blind man rose, and, in his eagerness, cast off his outer garment as he hastened to the place where Jesus stood. On seeing him, Jesus asked, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" He answered, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." And Jesus had compassion upon him, and said, "Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee." Here we have again a striking instance of an acknowledgment of Christ as the Messiah, in the very first cry of a blind man, in the epithet "thou Son of David." And this faith—that Christ was the Messiah, and that he could restore his sight—was that to which the Lord referred.

It was customary for those who lay under ceremonial defilements to go up to Jerusalem earlier than others, that they might undergo the legal purifications before the commencement of the

## MARY ANOINTS JESUS'S FEET.

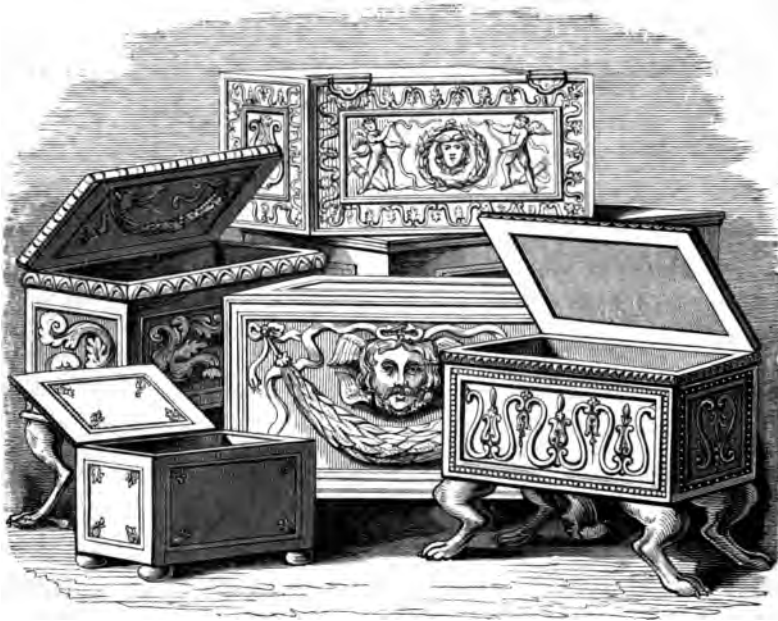
Passover. Those who were thus early at Jerusalem, as well as the residents, met together in the fore-courts of the temple, and speculated anxiously on the probabilities of our Lord's appearance at the feast. As he must have known of the resolution concerning him at which the Sanhedrim had now arrived, most people concluded that he would keep himself out of the way.

However, six days before the feast, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where he had lately raised Lazarus from the dead. Here he spent the remainder of the day, and the night. Many persons at Jerusalem having heard of his arrival at Bethany, went over in the hope of seeing him and the man he had raised from the dead together; and they were not disappointed, for Lazarus was among those who "sat at meat" with Jesus, at the supper which was that evening provided. The mention of this circumstance leads the Evangelist to record that many ruling men were so hardened as to meditate the death of Lazarus himself, on account of the attention drawn towards Christ by the presence and existence of a man he had raised from the dead.

As we might expect from our previous knowledge of the sisters Martha and Mary, they took very different parts in the entertainments of this remarkable evening. As women, they could not seat themselves at the table; but Martha, as usual, attended to the preparations of the supper, and busied herself in the outward service, while Mary surrendered herself to the full feeling of affectionate devotion to the Lord's person, rendered more lively and intense, we may well suppose, on account of her brother's restoration. She possessed a large quantity of costly ointment; and in order to testify her love, she sacrificed it all. She did what "the woman that was a sinner" had done before; she anointed his feet with the precious "nard," till the house was

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

filled with the powerful fragrance. An objection to this act as a wasteful extravagance arose this time from no other personage than Judas Iscariot; and the Evangelist John neglects not the opportunity of connecting with this objection another trait in his character. He had already pilfered from the



Alabaster Boxes for Perfumes — Roman Acerræ.

common fund of the disciples of Jesus, which had been confided to his charge; and hence the secret source of his discontent that Mary had not thrown the proceeds of her spikenard into the common treasury, if she desired to afford evidence of her love. Under this objection, in which some well-meaning disciples concurred, he concealed his true character and disposition, which was apparent only to the Saviour, who answered by a touching justification of Mary's deed as a pre-anointing for his coming

## TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

burial, followed by the remark—"The poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not always."

By the following morning it was well known in Jerusalem that Jesus would be that day in the city, and the people generally determined to give him a grand reception. Impure hopes may in part have prompted this course, and they may have expected that if a proof of attachment, so public and so general, were exhibited, Jesus might be induced to appear openly as the King Messiah. A great multitude therefore went forth to meet him, with such demonstrations of honour as were anciently shown to Oriental kings. A great many palms grew on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho; from these they broke off blooming branches and strewed them in the way: some also carried green boughs and branches of blossoms in their hands, as was customary when they celebrated the tabernacle and dedication feasts, while they sang songs of gratulation and praise.

Accompanied by the Jews who had come over to see Lazarus, the Saviour left Bethany the same morning and came to Bethphage—a row of houses on either side of the public way surrounded by fig-trees, whence its name "place of figs." The multitude had probably come thus far to meet him. Seeing the favourable disposition of the people towards him, Jesus availed himself of it, perhaps in order to make an abiding impression upon the disciples, when they should afterwards reflect upon the manner of his entrance into Jerusalem. That he was really the Messiah foretold by the prophets, he desired to impress strongly upon their minds. Now the prophet Zechariah had described the arrival of the Messiah as that of a peaceful king who felt interested in the welfare of his people, and who would enter the metropolis of his kingdom riding upon an ass. The ass was an animal used for riding in time of peace, while the horse was employed in times of war. Accordingly

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

our Lord made choice of this very mode of entrance which Zechariah had foretold. He sent two of his disciples forward to a place where he told them they would find a colt "on which no man had ever yet sat." This is not without meaning, as yearlings which have never borne the yoke, and never been employed for common purposes, were reserved for sacred uses. This colt they were to unloose and to bring to Jesus. They found the colt, and were proceeding to unloose it when the owners objected; but when the disciples said, "The Lord hath need of him," they, sharing in the



Christ's Entry into Jerusalem.

general feeling, felt glad and honoured, and allowed them to take not only the colt but the dam, which from natural instinct followed her young. They brought them to Jesus, and laid their clothes upon them both, not knowing which of them he would choose to ride. He mounted the colt, and rode onward, attended by the rejoicing crowd, who spread their garments in his path, and waved their branches with exulting shouts. The disciples fully shared in the enthusiasm of that hour; and when the triumphal procession

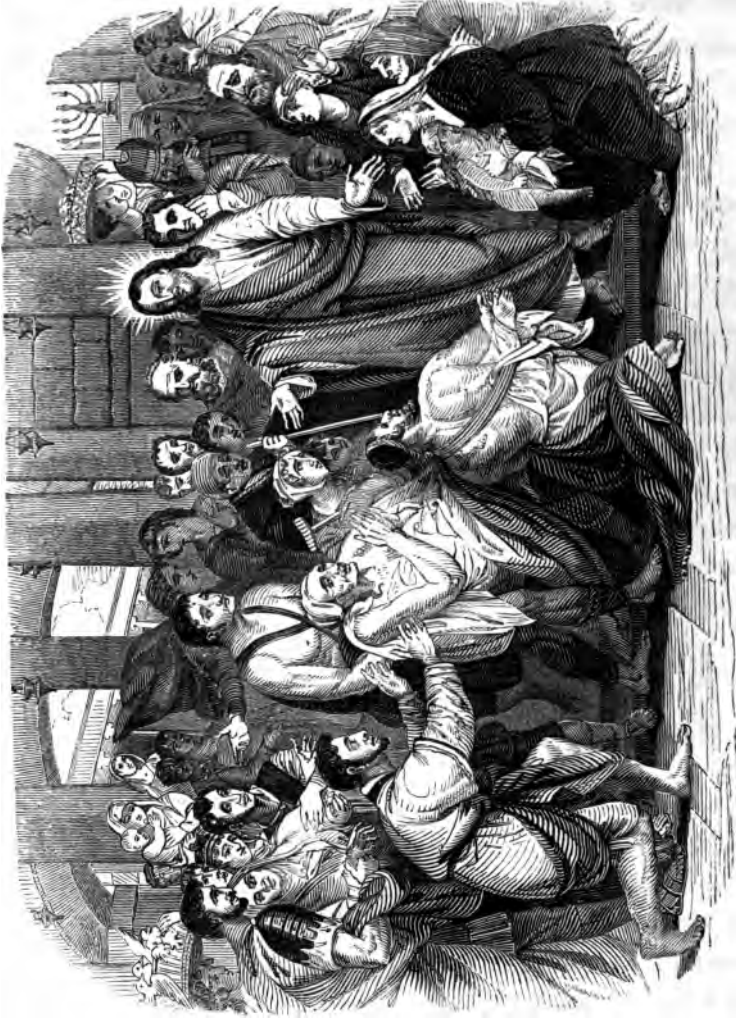
### SONG OF THE MULTITUDE.

came near to Jerusalem at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the multitude broke forth in singing the verses from the 118th Psalm, which were usually sung at the feasts already mentioned, and which were always considered to bear a reference to Messiah—

**“Hosanna ! Blessed is the king of Israel,  
That cometh in the name of the Lord !  
Blessed be the kingdom of our father David,  
That cometh in the name of the Lord !  
Hosanna in the highest !”**

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Christ healing the Sick.— West.

## DOOM OF JERUSALEM FORETOLD.

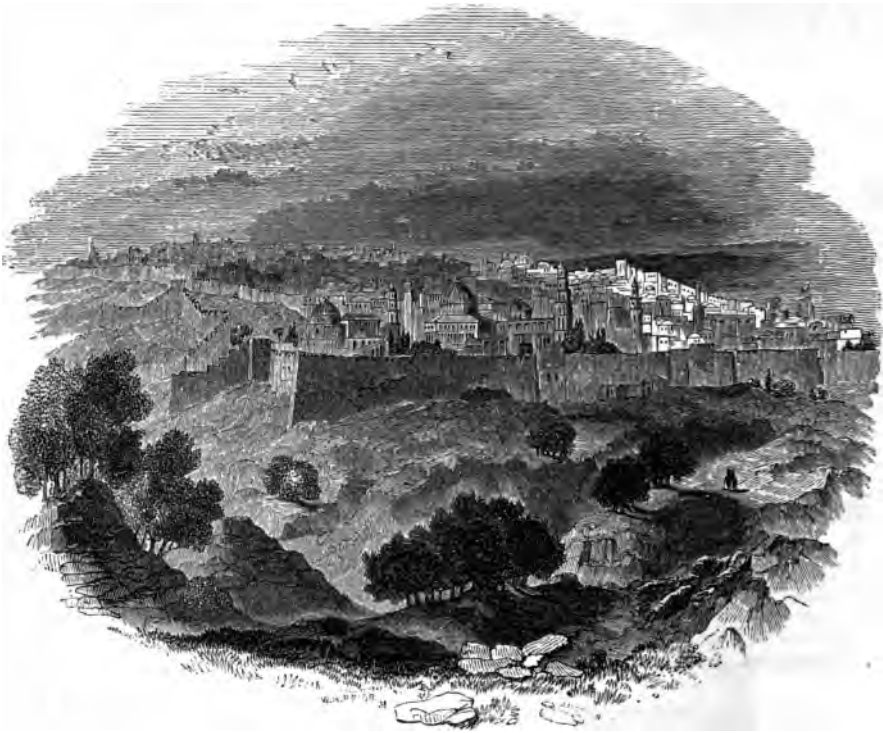
### CHAPTER XXVI.

JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM—FORETELLS ITS DOOM—HEALS THE LAME AND BLIND IN THE TEMPLE—LODGES AT BETHANY—JESUS GOES DAILY TO JERUSALEM—THE BARREN FIG-TREE—THE TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE—PARABLES—SUBTLE QUESTION OF THE PHARISEES—OF THE SADDUCEES—THE WIDOW'S MITE.



As he came near to Jerusalem, Jesus, in a solemn pause, stedfastly regarded its lofty towers and bulwarks, till he was moved even to tears by the clear foresight of the terrible doom which awaited that proud city, and which was destined to fall upon it before that generation passed away. He spoke in words which form both a picture and a prophecy—"The days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave thee one stone upon another, because thou knowest not the time of the visitation." This clear description of a siege as conducted by the Romans pointed out the terrible enemy which Jerusalem would have to withstand, and with great and minute accuracy indicates all the circumstances which actually took place in the fatal siege which left the holy city desolate before that generation had passed away.

All the city was moved by various emotions at this public entry of the Redeemer. Doubtless general attention was directed to his motions, and to observe the step which would next be taken by



Jerusalem.

him. He entered at the gate near the temple, and straightway proceeded to the sacred courts. The blind and lame of the city no sooner heard of his arrival than they hastened to him there, and he healed them. This was no other than his usual course. It was wonderful, beneficent, great; but it was not for him extraordinary, and the ill-founded expectations which had been raised were sorely disappointed. The children in the temple still kept up the cry which had before been raised; and the priests and scribes in high displeasure called his attention to it: "Hearest thou what these say?" To which he answered, "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

## THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

After some further discourse, which, with the previous proceedings, occupied the rest of the day, Jesus left the city and returned to Bethany, where he lodged.

The next morning, being Monday, Jesus and his disciples again left Bethany to spend the day in Jerusalem. On the way Jesus observed a fig-tree in full leaf, and, being hungry, went to it, expecting to find fruit thereon. As the fruit of the fig-tree is perfected before the leaf, it was natural to expect fruit upon a



The Fig-Tree.

tree which made this show of leaves; as the time of fig-gathering was not yet come, it was certain that the fruit which this tree ought to bear, had not yet been gathered. But Jesus found the tree without fruit, and said, in the hearing of his disciples, "Let no man eat fruit of thee henceforth for ever." He then proceeded to the city, on entering which, he went to the temple, and expelled from the sacred court the dealers and money-changers, by whose merchandise and tables it was thronged in the week before the

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Passover. This act was similar to that with which, three years before, he had commenced his ministry in Jerusalem. He then remained teaching in the temple, and the attention with which the people heard him prevented his enemies from venturing then to lay hands upon him.

In the evening our Lord again repaired to Bethany.

On returning to Jerusalem on the next morning, being Tuesday, the fig-tree on which he had the preceding day laid the weight of his curse, and which was then so rich in foliage, was found to be dried away even to the roots. This proceeding of our Lord was probably intended to teach that his power to punish the guilty was as strong as that which he had exercised in conferring benefits. But, with the usual beneficence of his character and actions, he proved this in the way least calculated to inflict injury or pain. It was exercised upon a fig-tree, barren, and therefore unprofitable to any one, but having the show, though it lacked the reality, of useful life; it was, moreover, a tree standing by the public way, and therefore belonging to no one who could complain that his property had been destroyed.

On proceeding to teach in the temple, the priests and others in authority gathered around him, requiring to know by what authority he taught in that place; for it was the province of the Sanhedrim to grant the right of teaching in the temple, and this Christ had never received. They perhaps hoped that he would answer that he acted under Divine authority as the Messiah, and that they might thus obtain matter of accusation against him. At another time he would perhaps so have answered; but now, being aware of the snare laid for him, he refrained from a direct answer, but, as on some other occasions, solved the question by another:—"The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?" This they could not answer, being aware that, if they replied "Of





Christ and the Tribute.—Rubens.

## TRIBUTE TO CÆSAR.

God," he would have asked why then they had not believed in him ; while they dreaded to say "Of men," lest the people, who generally regarded John as a great prophet, should be offended. In the course of the day our Lord delivered the well-known and striking parables of the Two Sons, of the Wicked Husbandman, and of the Wedding Garment.

Having failed in the former experiment, the Pharisees now tried our Saviour with a far more subtle and dangerous question. This was, whether it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?



Christ and the Tribute-Money.

If he answered that it was not lawful, they had ground on which to denounce him to the Romans ; whereas if he said that it was lawful, he would not fail to displease the people, as it was a very general opinion that it was not only degrading, but absolutely unlawful, for the free-born sons of Abraham to pay tribute to strangers and idolaters ; and it was the growth of this opinion that afterwards led to the revolt of the Jews and the ruin of the nation. Conscious of the snare laid for him, Jesus required to see the tribute-money. He asked whose image and inscription



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

the coin bore, and was told "Cæsar's;" on which he answered, 'Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' This answer seems to leave the question undecided, because he, who was not come to be a judge or a divider, would not be forced to give an answer either way to serve their purposes against himself. The questioners admired an answer so skilfully framed that they could not take hold of it to his disadvantage; and perceiving that it was useless to attempt "to entangle him in his talk," they gave over the design and left the place.

The Sadducees, a sect which disbelieved in the resurrection, and whose opinions were very prevalent among the upper classes in Judea, then put a question to him, proposing the case of a woman who, under the ancient law, married seven brothers in succession, and asking whose wife she would be in the life to come. This question Jesus answered without reserve, declaring that the relation of husband and wife did not exist in heaven; and



Christ answering the Pharisees concerning Divorcement.

## THE WIDOW'S MITE.

perceiving the covert blow at the notion of a future life which the question involved, he added further a proof of it from that part of Scripture (the Pentateuch) which alone they received as the revealed will of God. This he did by reminding them that when God called to Moses from the burning bush, he said, "*I am* the God of Abraham," &c., which was a proof that then Abraham really lived, seeing that he *is* not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Soon after Jesus broke forth into that terrible denunciation of the Pharisees and their doctrines which occupies the 23rd chapter of Matthew's Gospel; and which he concluded by declaring that the existing generation should not have passed away till all the blood they had shed, and all the iniquities they had committed, had been terribly avenged. Then, foreseeing the miseries which awaited the devoted city, he added mournfully, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings—and ye would not!"

It seems to have been just after this that Jesus, who sat over against the place where the chests were placed to receive the voluntary offerings of the people to the treasury of the temple, perceived a poor woman drop therein "two mites, which make a farthing." What is here called a farthing is the quadrans, worth about a farthing and a half, which was the smallest offering that would be received into the treasury, and the half of which was represented by a separate copper coin, the smallest then in use. Large sums were at the same time dropped by rich men into the sacred coffers. But our Lord directed the attention of his disciples to the woman's offering, and declared that its moral value far exceeded those of the wealthy offerers, for they offered the easy

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

excess of their abundance, whereas she offered all that she had, even all her living.

On leaving the temple for the day, one of the disciples called his Lord's attention to the size of the stones, and the magnificence of the buildings; to which Jesus answered, "Seest thou these great buildings? The days will come in which there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." And this, forty years after, was literally accomplished, the temple having been destroyed, sorely against the will of the conqueror himself, and the walls being eventually and designedly razed to the very ground.



Jerusalem, with the Mount of Olives.

## DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE PREDICTED.

### CHAPTER XXVII.

OUR LORD FORETELLS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE JEWISH STATE—AND THE COMING OF HIS KINGDOM—PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS—MARRIAGE CEREMONIES OF THE EAST—MEETING OF THE JEWISH COUNCIL—TREACHERY OF JUDAS—THE PASSOVER MADE READY—JESUS WASHES THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES.



LEAVING the city, Jesus passed over to the Mount of Olives, and sat down there over against the temple, when his disciples took the opportunity of questioning him on the subjects on which he had lately spoken. The prediction which he had just uttered, of the destruction of the temple, recalled to the memory all the other events which they supposed were to happen at the commencement of the Messiah's Kingdom. They therefore asked *when* the destruction of the temple would take place, and what would be the sign of his second coming, and the end of the world which would follow that event. To the first of these questions Jesus answered by describing the signs which should precede the destruction of the temple and city, which he depicted by vivid and poetical images. But to meet their preconceived notions, he so answered the question as to make it appear that the end of the world would follow at a much later period. At the destruction of the Jewish state he would so return to take vengeance upon the Jews, and to deliver his followers from persecution, that although he himself indeed would not be visible, yet he would so manifest his majesty as that they might almost see him with their own eyes: and

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

furthermore, that he would so return in the end of the world, and the solemn inauguration of the Messiah in his kingdom, that his glory, which had been seen only by his disciples on the first occasion, would then be manifest to all mankind.

Our Lord declined to indicate, other than by the sign of preceding circumstances, the time in which either of these great events should occur. These signs, if carefully heeded, would be well understood. This he illustrated by the parable of the fig-tree:—"When the branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so, likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that the kingdom of God is near, even at the doors." The uncertainty of these events to the world at large, their unexpectedness, he then illustrated by various comparisons, such as—"There shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left; two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left." The reason that he assigned for this reserve was, that the uncertainty might keep them in a condition of continual watchfulness and preparation. The necessity for this watchfulness and preparation was then illustrated by various striking comparisons and parables. One of these represents the different characters and conditions of persons at that day, by the parable of the different conduct of the Faithful and Unfaithful Servants under the delayed arrival of their absent lord. Another conveys the same illustration in the striking parable of the Ten Virgins, "five of whom were wise and five foolish," who being at a wedding party, and awaiting at night the coming of the bridegroom to take home his bride, slumbered while he delayed his coming, and, awakening with a start when the cry was raised—"Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him,"—found that their lamps had gone out, while those who remained awake and watchful had their lamps ready, and entered

## MARRIAGE CEREMONIALS IN THE EAST.

to the marriage, from which the others were shut out. The whole parable is a striking picture of the circumstances attending the important ceremony of fetching home the bride, as it existed among the Jews, and is still preserved in several countries of the East, from the Mediterranean to the Yellow Sea. This important ceremonial of the marriage-procession does not now, as it did in the time of Christ, take place by night, except in tropical countries, as India, where the heat of the day causes the preference of the night for such celebrations. There is then a great display of flambeaux and torches among the attendants, which gives a very lively idea of the details in this parable. It is probable that among the Jews the procession took place by night only during the heat of summer.

The parable of the Talents was again repeated with added particulars; and Jesus then proceeded to detail some of the circumstances of that solemn judgment which he will himself return to hold over all men, when every one shall, according to his deserts, be conveyed to the regions of bliss or woe.

We are not so minutely informed of our Lord's proceedings on the next day, being Wednesday; but he doubtless went again to the city, as we are informed, generally for the whole period, that "In the day-time he was teaching in the temple; but at night he went out and abode in the Mount of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple for to hear him." The only fact stated is that Jesus reminded his disciples that it was now two days to the Passover, when "the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified;" which is the first time that he distinctly and without a metaphor expressed the kind of death which he knew to await him. It seems to have been on this day also that the members of the Sanhedrim held a private sitting in the house of the high-priest, Caiaphas, where they deliberated on the best means

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

of apprehending Jesus and effecting his death, with the least danger of creating an uproar among the people.

Unhappily, they found among Christ's immediate followers one but too willing to assist their views. This was Judas Iscariot, who came to them, and agreed, for thirty pieces of silver, to seek an opportunity for betraying him into their hands. The motive of this wretched man has been very much disputed. The more simple and harsher view is that which holds that he betrayed his master to death for this sum of money; but this has been judged inconsistent with the fact of his repentance so soon as he saw that his Lord was actually condemned. This seems to show that he expected a different result; and the paltry sum of money might easily have been acquired by one who had charge of the bag, without staining his soul with so black a crime. It has been supposed by some, that in the conviction that Christ could and would, as on former occasions, deliver himself out of their hands, he intended merely to trifle with the priests in making this offer to them. But others think the whole proceeding best accounted for by supposing that Judas, annoyed at the tardiness of Jesus in openly avowing himself to be the Messiah, and of taking upon him the great power which belonged to him in that character, was solicitous to place him in a position which would compel him to declare himself, and by that act commence his reign upon the earth.

Thursday at length arrived, when all the inhabitants of Jerusalem prepared to celebrate the Passover. At this feast strangers from all parts of the land flocked to Jerusalem, and the residents felt themselves bound to set apart and make ready all the spare rooms in their houses, for the use of the strangers in celebrating the Passover. The ceremony itself consisted in eating a lamb with particular ceremonies, in commemoration of the deliverance



Modern Jewish Passover.

from Egypt. As it was necessary that a lamb should be eaten, and that none of it should be left, parties sufficiently large for the purpose were usually formed. The number who sat at the table was usually from twelve to fifteen ; and as our Lord and his apostles were thirteen, they were enabled to take this last and solemn meal by themselves, without the presence of strangers.

The time being fully come, Jesus sent Peter and John into the city and told them that they would meet a man bearing a pitcher of water, whom they were to follow, and make ready the Passover in the house to which he went. It so happened : and on asking the master of the house to show them the chamber he had prepared for strangers, they were conducted to “a large upper chamber, ready furnished and prepared” with the requisite seats, table, and utensils. Here the Passover was made ready by the disciples ; and in the evening Jesus came and sat down with them to eat of it.



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

The substantial part of the supper being ended, a dispute arose among the disciples respecting their precedence, "who should be the greatest" in their Lord's coming kingdom. This shows how little they had profited by recent instructions. And Jesus, knowing that they would soon understand the truth full well, did not this time attempt to undeceive them; but he neglected not to seize the occasion of teaching them the lesson that humility and self-denial constituted true greatness in the kingdom which he came to establish in the hearts of men. He left the table and laid aside his outer robe, and, having taken a basin and towel, proceeded to wash his disciples' feet, an act usually performed by the humblest menials in a house. All the disciples submitted in silence to this proceeding, except Peter, who, being much shocked to see his Lord thus employed, protested that he should never wash his feet. But when Jesus gravely answered, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," the apostle, with the usual impulsiveness of his character, cried, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my feet." Jesus answered, that washing the feet sufficed; and when he had again taken his place at the table he proceeded to explain the instruction he intended to convey, which is shortly stated in the words, "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

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## JUDAS'S TREACHERY FORETOLD.

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

**JESUS FORETELLS HIS OWN BETRAYAL—INSTITUTES THE HOLY COMMUNION—COMFORTS HIS MOURNING DISCIPLES—GIVES THEM THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—OFFERS A SUBLIME PRAYER IN THEIR BEHALF.**



It was just after this event that Jesus took occasion to intimate that among the trusted disciples then present, there was one who would betray him to his enemies. This gave them great concern ; and, after a pause, they began to ask him severally, “ Lord, is it I ? ” At this time they were seated, or rather reclining on the bench, or triclinium, which enclosed the table ; and they were placed in such a manner that the “ beloved disciple,” John, lay with his head towards his master’s bosom ; and to him Peter beckoned that he should put the question more distinctly. He did so, by asking, probably in a low voice, “ Lord, who is it ? ” To which Jesus answered, probably also in a subdued voice, “ He to whom I shall give the sop when I have dipped it ; ” and immediately he dipped the sop and gave it to Judas. It was usual, after the second cup of wine at the Paschal meal, for the father of the house, or head of the party, to take a piece of unleavened bread, break it in pieces and give a bit to each of those present, most commonly after having dipped it in the broth. This was probably the “ sop ” in question, and we may suppose that it was the turn of Judas to receive it.

On this, Judas, who, as being near enough to receive this, had

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

probably overheard John's question, asked in a low voice, "Lord, is it I?" and was answered in an under tone, "It is thou," by Jesus, who then added aloud, "What thou doest, do quickly:" on which Judas immediately left the place. The disciples generally had evidently not caught this conversation, for they supposed that he had gone forth on some charge connected with the distribution of alms from the common purse with which he was intrusted. But in fact he went to the priests to arrange the plan of operation for betraying his Lord to them that very night, in completion of the engagement into which he had already entered.

As the Passover repast began late in the evening, and it was now already more than half-completed, the night must then have already set in when the traitor separated himself from this circle of humility and love, and hastened through the lonesome darkness to the enemies of Jesus.

When Judas had actually withdrawn, and with that the certainty of his horrible deed was fully determined, the consciousness of victory over sin and death rose triumphant to the mind of the Divine Saviour, and absorbed for the moment all other considerations; and he said, "*Now* the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him." He then intimated to the apostles that the time was near in which he was to be taken from them, and added, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Although our Lord had more than once expressed himself with sufficient plainness respecting his approaching death, and even the manner of it, the disciples, still warped by their early notions respecting the Messiah and his reign, could not understand his words in the sense he intended to convey. Possibly they thought only of a temporary removal of the Redeemer, through which he might escape from treason and from the plots of his enemies. Therefore the ardent

## THE LAST SUPPER.

Peter inquired, "Lord, whither goest thou?" Jesus answered, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Gathering from this, perhaps, that some danger was connected with the removal of his beloved Master, Peter rejoined, "Why cannot I follow thee *now*? I will lay down my life for thy sake." But Jesus, looking through the soul, perceived that this declaration arose more from a swell of generous feeling, than from a firmly-grounded purpose; and therefore warned him to look well to his own heart: "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice."

The wine-cup was repeatedly handed round during the Paschal suppers, and the Jewish writers inform us that the wine was mixed with water: although, indeed, this would be scarcely needed with such weak wines as are used at meal-times in the East. When they had come to the last of the wine-cups usually taken, our Lord proceeded to institute the Sacrament of the Holy Communion,



The Last Supper.—Raffaello.

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in the well-known words which implied that the drinking of the cup and eating of the bread was henceforth to be taken as an act commemorative of him—the wine of his blood shed, and the bread of his body given up, for the sins of the world. By this act, he in fact formally established a new religion to be sealed by his out-poured blood and wounded body, of which the wine and bread were to become the symbols.

After this, our Lord, perceiving that the disciples were still very much distressed at what he had before said, confirmed as it was by the solemn intimations of the rite which had been just established, proceeded to console them in the beautiful discourse which occupies the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, beginning "Let not your heart be troubled," &c. In this he first consoles them by the consideration, that by going from them (that is, by his death and passion), mansions on high would be prepared for them; but being interrupted by Thomas with a remark which showed that he was still thinking of an earthly palace, Jesus proceeded to explain that *he* was himself the way to this high heritage, and that only through faith could its enjoyment be secured. This faith they were to manifest by acts of obedience to what they had already heard from him, or might hereafter be taught; and especially by obedience to his new commandment of mutual love. Then, to excite them to the fulfilment of his commands, he added a new promise, that of a Helper. During his stay among them, their weakness and faithlessness had been so great, that they had never been able to dispense with him as a stay and support; and now that he was about to leave them, "another Comforter" would come to them, from him and from the Father, "even the Spirit of Truth," by whom they should be guided aright, and be taught much which had hitherto been purposely left obscure and unexplained.

Jesus then arose as if to depart, saying, "Arise, let us go

## LAST ADDRESS TO THE DISCIPLES.

hence ;” but the importance of these last precious moments, and his love to his disciples, constrained him, and he sat down again. He warned them that to adhere to him in faith, and to each other in brotherly love, was the only way in which they could prosper. This he illustrated by the union of a vine and its branches.

He then proceeded to explain that it was not for them to expect prosperity and enjoyment in this life. Far otherwise: he warned them that many trials and persecutions awaited them, arising from the world’s hatred of those principles which it would be their privilege and duty to teach. Being thus forewarned, they would know, when these things befel them, that the high purpose of God was not frustrated by the sufferings to which they were exposed, but rather accomplished; and that they did not come to them merely as unforeseen misfortunes and accidents.

The Redeemer had now spoken a long time, and he at length wished for some reply, to the end that he might, as his custom was, add thereupon new instructions. But, perceiving the disciples around him in silence, surrendering themselves up in sorrow at the



Disciples weeping.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

idea of that separation which he had brought so distinctly before them, he proceeded to animate and encourage them by bringing before their minds once more the great consequences which would follow his departure, especially as regarded the manifestation of the Comforter, and the high teachings, powers, and succours which he would impart. He added that, although he was himself to be taken from them, it was but to the end that he might soon, in a more perfect and glorious manner, be restored to them. Much of what he said to them on this point, they appear not *then* to have understood; and perceiving this, Christ admitted that he had often spoken to them in dark sayings, but the time was near at hand in which all things would be made plain to them.

The hour of his passion was drawing on now with rapid pace; and Jesus having clearly before his eyes the influence which it would exercise upon the disciples, proceeded to offer up on their behalf the earnest and beautiful prayer contained in the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel. Nor was it for them only; for in this most impressive address he contemplated with satisfaction his almost finished work:—"I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." He then prayed for the disciples, "those whom he had chosen out of the world;" and for the church to be formed through their teaching, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

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## GETHSEMANE.

### CHAPTER XXIX.

GETHSEMANE—THE AGONY OF OUR LORD—JUDAS BETRAYS HIM WITH A KISS—THE DISCIPLES FORSAKE HIM—PETER DENIES HIM—THE HIGH-PRIEST CONDEMNS HIM—SOLDIERS ILL-TREAT HIS SACRED PERSON.



OW our Lord went forth from the house, and proceeded across the valley of the Kidron to a garden near the foot of the Mount of Olives. The garden was called Gethsemane, which name it derived from the oil-presses which were or had been there. Arrived in this place, Jesus desired the apostles to remain, while he himself retired to some distance, attended only by his favoured disciples, Peter, James, and John. Then "he began to be sorrowful and very heavy;" and turning to his disciples, who now witnessed the deep distress of him whom they had seen glorified on the Mount of Transfiguration, he declared to them his anguish, and desired them to tarry there in watchfulness and prayer, while he withdrew to a more retired part of the garden, about a stone's throw distance from them. Here he underwent that terrible and mysterious agony of soul which made him cry, "O, my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but he humbly added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." He then rose and went over to the three disciples, and found them all asleep. He chid them gently, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" but kindly admitted that in them the spirit indeed was willing, though the flesh was weak. He then returned to the place he had



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

quitted, and again poured out the anguish of his soul before God : —“O, my Father, if this cup may not pass from me without my drinking it, thy will be done.” Returning to his disciples, he found them again asleep; and, after rousing them, went back again to the former place. This time his agony became more intense, and his prayer more fervent; so dreadful were his sufferings, that “as he prayed his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground,” although he was then in the open air, and in the cool of the night. Then, in that awful moment, there appeared an angel from heaven standing near him



Christ in the Garden.

in a visible form, strengthening him by that sensible token of the Father's favour, and suggesting such holy consolations as were suitable to animate his soul in such a struggle.

Rising after this dreadful mental conflict, Jesus repaired once more to his disciples, and found them again “sleeping for sorrow.” Knowing that his enemies had already entered the garden, he said, “Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is come, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.” *This*

### MALCHUS'S EAR HEALED.

roused them effectually: but they had scarcely risen to their feet when a band of armed men appeared with lanterns and torches, sent by the Sanhedrim to apprehend him. They were led on by Judas, who was well acquainted with this favourite resort of his master, and had given them the token that the man whom they should see him kiss was the one they were to apprehend. Accordingly the traitor went up straight to Jesus, saying, "Hail, master!" and kissed him. Jesus said, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" and immediately advancing to the armed men, asked them, "Whom seek ye?" With that misgiving which accompanies an evil conscience, associated in their case with a vague impression of the dignity of the person they came to seize, they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." He answered, "I AM HE;" on which the divinity flashed through their darkened consciences, which had been already roused, and they fell to the ground. The by-standers, meanwhile, as is customary in such cases, seeing that those to whom the affair was properly entrusted did not immediately press forward, seem themselves to have laid hands upon the Redeemer. Enraged at this, the ever-ardent Peter drew his sword, and the stroke which he gave with it cut off the right ear of one of the most forward of the number, a servant of the high-priest, named Malchus. On this Jesus commanded him to sheathe his sword, saying, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" He then put forth his hand and healed the wound of his bitterest assailant, thus affording a splendid example of that return of good for evil which he so constantly enjoined.

When the immediate impression upon the minds of the band by the divinity in Jesus had passed away, and when they had once more succeeded in silencing the voice of conscience, they seized the Saviour, and led him back to the city, to the house of

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

the high-priest, in which a sufficient number of the Sanhedrim had already assembled for the occasion. This was illegal, as the law then in operation is known to have enjoined that all judicial proceedings before that body should take place in the day-time, and in the usual hall of assembly.

When the apostles saw that their Lord was led away by his enemies, they dispersed in different directions, as Christ had foretold, apprehensive of being involved in his peril. Peter and John, however, followed at a distance, and, after a short time, the latter, who was personally known at the house of the high-priest, applied for admittance, and was allowed by the portress to enter. Knowing that Peter was outside, John then sought admission for him, and obtained it. The woman who kept the gate, seeing him with John, concluded that he also was a disciple of Christ, and made a remark to that effect. She seems to have done so without any particular meaning or ill intention; but Peter being thoroughly alarmed, denied the charge with some vehemence. On entering the court they found themselves in front of the public room, or hall of audience, open in front, where sat the Sanhedrim, before which Jesus then stood. The apostles remained in the court, and joined the party of officers of the high-priest and others, who were gathered round a fire which they had kindled in the open air; for although at the time of the Passover the days were warm in Judea, the nights were very chill. They were thus enabled to become witnesses of the transactions which then took place.

The high-priest at first attempted to draw from Christ such admissions as would afford easy ground for proceeding against him. But Jesus knowing that the high-priest had predetermined to condemn him, and that his answers were only sought as a ground and support to that determination, appealed to his public





Peter denying Christ.- Poussin.

## PETER DENIES CHRIST.

teachings, and declined to give any specific reply to so unjust an examination.

False witnesses were then produced against him, whose testimony was of little importance, till two of them avowed that they had heard him say that he was able to overthrow the temple of God, and in three days rear it up again. This was, according to existing views, an accusation of blasphemy against God, on which the religious tribunals of the Jews could lawfully condemn him. It was, therefore, eagerly taken hold of, and he was asked if he admitted this charge. He was silent. The high-priest then asked him plainly whether he was actually the Messiah. Christ, who knew his disposition, answered, "If I should tell you, you would not believe me." But on being pressed for a definite answer, "Art thou then the Messiah?" he answered, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man in his glory at the right hand of God." On hearing this, they rent their clothes as at some horrid blasphemy; and declaring that no further evidence was required, they hastened to procure his final condemnation from the Roman governor, by whom alone it could be granted.

While these things were taking place, Peter saw that he began to be eyed with suspicion by the party around the fire, and therefore withdrew towards the gate. Here he was again charged by the porters as being "one of them;" which he again peremptorily denied, and then went back to the group around the fire. Here he was soon again accused of being one of the followers of Christ. One, a relative of Malchus, whose ear Peter had cut off, began to recollect that he had seen him in the garden; another alleged his Galilean dialect as a proof of the fact. The fear of man prevailed. Peter again most solemnly denied that he knew "the man of whom they spoke;" and while he was confirming this protestation with many oaths,

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

the crowing of the cock rang through the court and struck him dumb. At the same moment Jesus turned and looked upon Peter. That sorrowful look, so full of tender reproach, smote the apostle to the soul. He went out and wept bitterly.

After he had been condemned by the high-priest, Jesus was exposed to the insults and mal-treatment of the servants and officers while waiting till the morning should be far enough advanced to take him before the Roman governor. He was buffeted and spit upon; and they even went so far as to blind-fold him, and then to smite him, asking derisively, "Prophecy who is it that smote thee?" "All which injuries might have been greater than his patience," remarks Jeremy Taylor, "had his patience been less than infinite."

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## REMORSE AND DEATH OF JUDAS.

### CHAPTER XXX.

THE REMORSE OF JUDAS—CHARACTER OF THE ROMAN PROCURATOR—ACCUSATIONS AGAINST CHRIST—PILATE SEEKS TO RELEASE HIM—SENDS HIM TO HEROD ANTIPAS—MOCKERY OF JESUS—CHRIST REJECTED—CROWNED WITH THORNS.



WHEN the wretched and mistaken traitor Judas, who had been anxiously watching the result of these proceedings, saw that Jesus was condemned—that his acknowledgment that he was the Messiah had not been attended with the expected effects—and that Christ himself had not exerted the Divine powers which rested in him for the maintenance of his claim—he was conscience-stricken and terrified at the part he had himself taken. He went forthwith to the council, and casting down the silver he had received, cried, “I have sinned, in that I betrayed innocent blood.” But they dismissed him with the cool assurance that this was not their affair, but his; upon which the miserable man went away and hanged himself. The money which he had left with them could not be put into the treasury, because it was the price of blood; and they therefore bought with it a field in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, called the Potter’s field, and set that field apart as a burying place for strangers.

Although the Jewish council had in fact condemned Jesus to death as a false prophet and a blasphemer, the sentence could not be carried into effect without being confirmed by the Roman procurator, the power of life and death having already been



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taken away from the Jewish tribunals. The procurator was always present in Jerusalem with a strong force at the Passover, to repress any disturbances which might arise among the vast numbers of people whom this festival never failed to bring to the holy city. The actual procurator was named Pontius Pilate, who had already held the office for six years, during which he had made himself so odious to the Jews by his exactions, and severities, that he began to be alarmed lest they should forward complaints of his government to Rome, and thus bring him into disgrace with the Emperor Tiberius, who was known to be very attentive to complaints against the provincial governors. He was, therefore, at this time in a frame of mind not further to disoblige the Jewish authorities, but rather to take the line of conduct which he supposed would give them pleasure. To this person our Lord was hurried away in the early morning, that his confirmation of the judgment passed by the Sanhedrim might be obtained. The public business was transacted in the Prætorium, which had formerly been Herod's palace, and to this place our Saviour was taken. The Jews could not enter the Prætorium, lest they should contract defilement in the house of a heathen; and therefore Pilate caused his seat to be set in the Gabbatha, or Pavement, in front of the Porch, where on such occasions he was wont to hear the matters that were brought before him.

In order the rather to determine the governor to confirm their sentence, the accusers sunk as much as possible the religious point, which was uppermost in their own minds, and strove to give prominence and colouring to the political aspect of the accusation, stating that Christ wished to excite a tumult, and to establish an earthly kingdom. Pilate had already, without doubt, heard some things respecting Jesus, for he would seem from the beginning

## CHRIST BEFORE PILATE.

to have formed an idea of him, as being a well-meaning enthusiast. Being also well aware how prone the Jewish ecclesiastics were to act upon the impulses of private hatred, he commenced the proceedings by endeavouring to ascertain whether there were really just cause for condemning to death the man they had brought before him. The members of the Sanhedrim, who had been accustomed to see the governor generally give a simple assent to their decisions, were unprepared for any such investigation ; and they answered, somewhat impertinently, " If this fellow were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." Pilate, however, obviously considering that there was nothing in the case to bring it under his jurisdiction, told them to go and put in force the enactments of their own law against him—implying that he considered the punishment of scourging, or of expulsion from the synagogue, quite sufficient for the occasion. Their quiet answer, " It is not lawful for us *to put any man to DEATH,*" gave him very plainly to understand that no less punishment would satisfy them. Then seeing clearly that Pilate, who had so often been compelled to listen to their religious disputes, would not take up the case on such grounds, they pressed more strongly the charge of treason against the Roman government, alleging that he had forbidden tribute to be paid to Cæsar, saying, that he " himself was Christ, a king." On hearing this, Pilate went into the porch, where Jesus stood in custody of the guard, and asked, " Art thou the King of the Jews ?" To this Jesus, as if to ascertain the sense in which he asked the question—whether in the earthly sense which it must have had among the Romans, or in the higher spiritual sense which it had or should have had among the Jews, asked, " Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell thee of it ?" Pilate answered with some heat, " Am I a Jew ? Thine own nation, and the chief priests, have brought thee unto

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me: What hast thou done?"—which seems to imply that he desired his question to be understood in the sense which the term commonly bore among the Jews. Jesus then readily replied, that his kingdom was *not* of this world; adding, that he who had permitted himself to be apprehended by his enemies, and brought before his tribunal without resistance, could have no political designs. Still desirous of adhering to a point which was necessary for a judicial opinion, without troubling himself with other matters, Pilate asked, "Art thou a king then?" that is, "But dost thou still claim to be a king?" Jesus denied not that he was a king, but he intimated that his kingdom was not earthly—its subjects being such as sought after and loved *the truth*. Pilate, with all the contempt of a superficial man of the world towards the higher objects of existence, exclaimed, "What is truth?" and without waiting for an answer, went out to the accusers, confirmed in his first notion, that Christ was merely a well-meaning enthusiast, whom, as innocent of the designs laid to his charge, he felt some sympathy for, and wished to deliver.

He declared to the excited assembly that he could not find any crime in him. On this, the accusers vehemently answered, that he had set the whole country in an uproar from Judea even unto Galilee. The mention of Galilee, which was not in his jurisdiction, but under the notorious Herod Antipas, suggested to Pilate a means of getting rid of this affair—without, on the one hand, shedding innocent blood, or, on the other, offending the Sanhedrim—by sending the prisoner to Herod, who was then in Jerusalem. The doubts which Herod entertained respecting Jesus have already been indicated. He was therefore glad to have him before him, in the hope of seeing some miracle performed by him. But the Divine Saviour was not minded to use his high powers for the mere purpose of gratifying an idle curiosity. Not only so, but



Christ Rejected.

when he saw the empty and vain reasons of the worldling before whom he stood, he remained silent while questioned by him. Provoked at the indignity which he fancied to be thus offered to him, the Tetrarch abandoned Jesus to the scornful treatment of his soldiers. Clothed in a bright-coloured robe, as a mark of contempt for the dignity which he assumed, Herod sent Christ back again to the Roman governor. The latter, finding the case

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thus returned upon his hands, had again to contend with the embarrassment between his fear of man and his dislike to abandon a person so clearly innocent to his fate. One further alternative then occurred to his mind. It was a custom at this feast that the governor should set free a prisoner ; and there happened to be then in prison a very notorious robber and murderer named Barabbas, whom he supposed the Jews would not willingly liberate. He therefore proposed to them the choice between this man and “the king of the Jews,” as he sarcastically denominated Jesus. The members of the Sanhedrim then present forthwith exerted themselves to induce the crowd to call for the release of Barabbas. It was at this stage of the proceedings that Pilate received a message from his wife, entreating him to deal justly with the person now before him, on whose account she had been visited with painful dreams that night. This had some effect upon Pilate, but not enough to induce him to stem that strong current of popular clamour, which, contrary to his expectation, was expressed in the loud cry of “Not this man, but Barabbas.”



Christ Scourged.

## SCOURGED AND CROWNED WITH THORNS.

Yet the governor was willing to try one last resource. He resolved to scourge Jesus, in the hope that this might suffice to appease the madness of the people ; and he had the more reason to expect this, as the Roman scourging was very far more severe than that in use among the Jews themselves. It was inflicted by a scourge of thongs twisted together ; and sometimes, in order to increase the severity of the lash, small cubic pieces of bone were woven into it. It is described, by those who witnessed its effects, as lacerating the flesh, and laying bare the veins and arteries. To this terrible punishment was the Saviour of men subjected ; and the soldiery, not satisfied with inflicting the agonies of the scourge, but taking the hint from the treatment he had already received from Herod, proceeded to invest him with the mock insignia of royalty. They set a diadem of sharp thorns upon his head, they placed in his hands a reed for a sceptre, and they cast over his bleeding shoulders a purple robe.



Christ crowned with Thorns.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

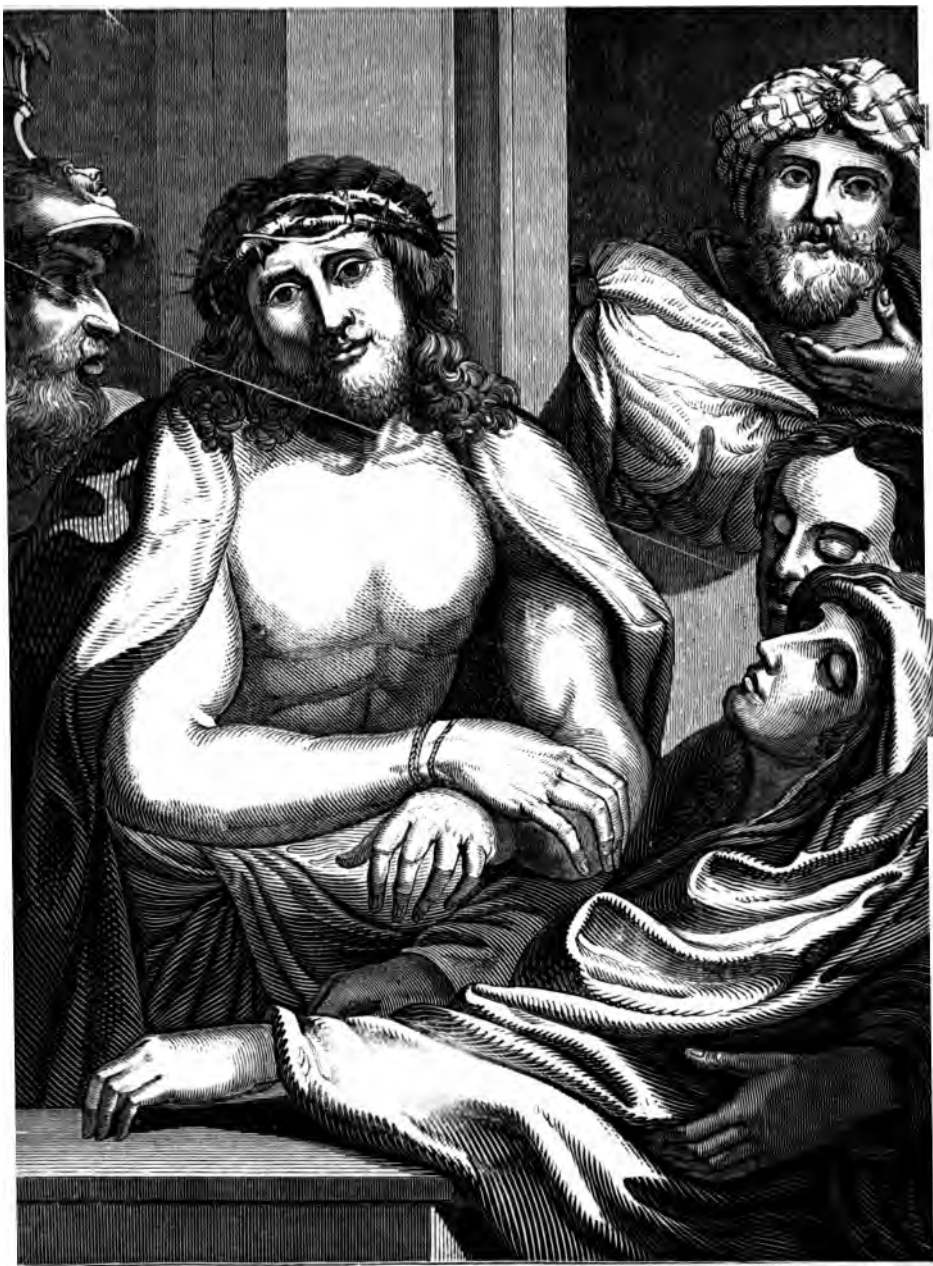
### CHAPTER XXXI.

CRUELTY AND MADNESS OF THE JEWS—PILATE'S FEARS—HE DELIVERS JESUS TO BE CRUCIFIED—BEARING THE CROSS—THE CRUCIFIXION—TITLE FIXED TO THE CROSS—JESUS COMMENDS HIS MOTHER TO THE CARE OF THE DISCIPLE JOHN.



WHEN they scornfully greeted him with the salutation which was commonly bestowed upon the emperor, and smote him with their rods upon the head, causing the thorny diadem to tear his sacred brow. At length Pilate bade them give over their cruel sport, and bring forth their prisoner to the people. Pilate preceded them, and said to the Sanhedrim, "I have brought him forth that ye may know I find no fault in him;" and pointing to the pale and bleeding figure which then appeared arrayed in the robes of mockery, he cried, "Behold the man!" And were they now touched with compassion now? Was not their vengeance now satisfied? No: they no sooner saw him, than they cried with one voice, "Crucify him! crucify him!"

Pilate seems to have been appalled at the mad fury which he witnessed; and he told them to crucify him themselves, for he would himself have no hand in an act so unrighteous. This, however, conveyed no formal permission; and, accordingly, the Jews proceeded to urge their demand for the death of Christ as a matter of right. At first they had not wished to found their accusation against Jesus upon his alleged violation of their religious laws,



Ecce Homo.—Correggio.





### PILATE'S FEARS.

concluding that they might bring the affair more quickly to a close by investing it with a political aspect. But when they saw that the governor did not take it up as they had expected, they reverted to their religious accusation. They cried, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he hath made himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he feared still more. He had already observed something extraordinary in the conduct of Christ; and when to this was added the dream of his wife, a sort of shuddering apprehension came upon him, that there might possibly be something supernatural in this Jesus. He therefore turned to him and asked, "Whence art thou?" He already knew he was from Galilee, and hence the question was, whether he claimed to derive his origin from heaven. Knowing that a further discussion would only serve to gratify the vain and idle curiosity of Pilate, Jesus was silent. Thus left to his own impressions and presentiments, which had become painful, the governor endeavoured to compel an answer by threats. "Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Perceiving the inward anguish which Pilate felt in his judgment concerning him, Jesus strengthened this impression by awakening in him the consciousness of his dependence upon a higher power; but, knowing far better than his judge the awful significance attached to his judgment upon the Son of God, he added that the great guilt contained in it attached less to him than to the accusers. The more this expression of the Divine Saviour showed that he was free from every feeling of personal hostility, the more heavily did his case press upon the mind of Pilate, and he wished with the more sincerity to be able to release him. He seems to have expressed himself to this effect to the people. They were therefore full of fury at the prospect that their prey might be torn from them; and delayed not to

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discharge the last arrow in their quiver; and it was effectual. They had recourse to the means which they knew would work most effectually upon Pilate. "If thou lettest this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." Knowing how easy it was to awaken suspicion in the mind of the Emperor Tiberius against the governors of distant provinces, this expression was full of terror to Pilate, who was conscious of acts in his government which would not bear examination, if the Jews should be so far influenced against him as to denounce him to the emperor. Regard for his own personal safety prevailed over every higher consideration, and he sought to suppress the loud voice of conscience within. He ascended the judgment-seat, and, causing Jesus once more to be led out before the palace, said sarcastically, "Behold your king!" Then arose the rabid cry of "Crucify him! crucify him!" But Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your king?" To which the Jews, who had in fact no desire more intense than to separate themselves from the Romans, answered by hypocritically pretending the utmost attachment to their rule: "We have no king but Cæsar." Still torn between the reproofs of his conscience and the fear of man, the governor, sought to allay the former by calling for water, in which he washed his hands before the multitude, intending by this symbolical act to express that he wished to have no part in this unrighteous condemnation: "I am innocent," he said, "of the blood of this righteous person: see ye to it." With one voice they answered, "His blood be on us, and on our children!"—a most fatal imprecation, and most dreadfully fulfilled upon them at the siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

The struggle was now over; the deep malice of the many had prevailed, and the judge had abandoned the Redeemer to their rage, while believing him to be innocent. The place of execution

## CRUCIFIXION.

was near the city. In other cases it was not usual among the Jews to carry into effect sentences of execution immediately after they were pronounced; but in this case the popular madness would suffer no delay. Having been condemned by the Roman tribunal, the execution itself took place after the Roman manner, and by the hands of Roman soldiers. Under the Jewish law the death



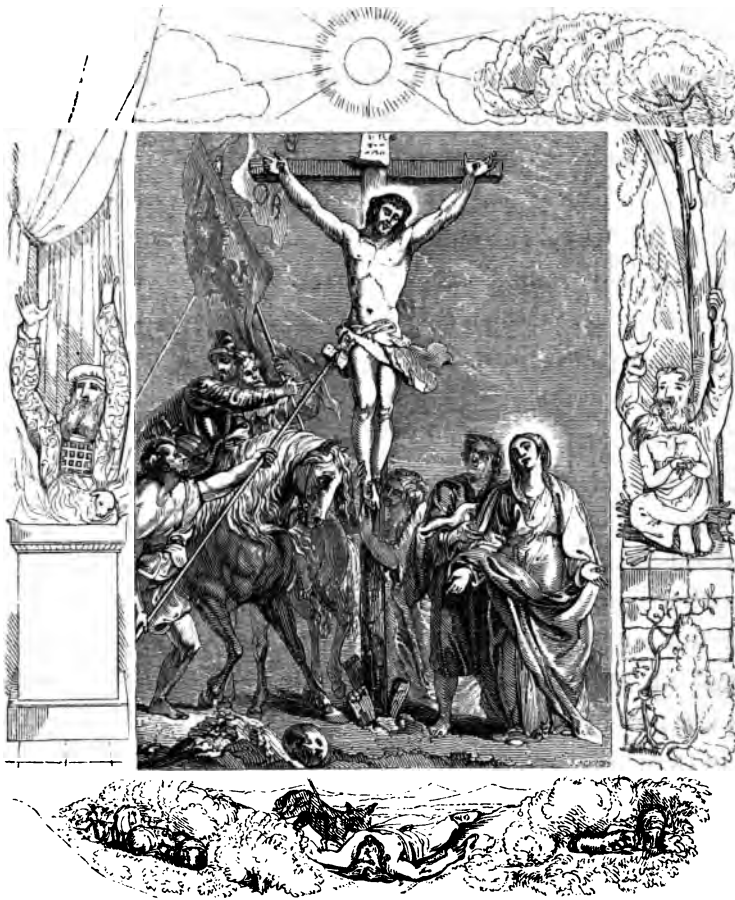
Bearing the Cross.

## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

would have been by stoning; but Jesus himself had long foretold that the more lingering torture of death by crucifixion was appointed for him.

Among the Romans it was common for the condemned to bear their own cross to the place of execution. Jesus carried his through the city itself; but having been exhausted by his previous sufferings, when he arrived at the gate the soldiers placed the cross upon a certain Jew of Cyrene, named Simon, who had probably manifested some sympathy for Christ, and who with his family was attached to him. As the sad procession thus moved on it was followed by a large number of people, particularly women, who, in the fulness of their sympathy, wept and lamented for him greatly. Touched by their grief, the Saviour turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children!" which he said in reference to the calamities which, as he had already declared, were to befall the city and nation before that generation had passed away.

On arriving at a place called Calvary, otherwise Golgotha ("skull-place"), the cross was planted in the earth. The form of the cross and the mode of execution upon it are too well, and in the main correctly, known from paintings to require particular description. It may suffice to mention that the cross consisted of a piece of wood erected perpendicularly, and intersected by another at right angles near the top, so as to resemble the letter T. There is no mention in ancient writers of anything on which the feet of the crucified person rested; but near the middle of the perpendicular beam there projected a piece of wood on which he partly sat, and which served as a support to the body, the weight of which might otherwise have torn the hands from the nails driven through them. The naked victim was first elevated to this small projection, and the hands were then tied with a rope to the



The Crucifixion.

transverse beam, and nailed through the palm. The feet were then nailed to the perpendicular beam, not, as some allege, by one nail through both feet, but by two nails or spikes being driven one through each foot.

Thus was He “who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities” treated: thus did He suffer upon whom was the “chastisement of our peace.”

The Romans were in the habit of affixing to all criminals a roll containing a record of the crimes for which they were punished,

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which was by them denominated *titulus* (title). Pilate manifested his sarcastic contempt of the Jews by causing the title upon the cross of Jesus to bear the inscription of "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS," in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Sorely annoyed at this, the Jews endeavoured to get it altered to "Jesus of Nazareth, who said, I am the King of the Jews:" but the governor seems to have found enjoyment in their mortification, and sent them away with the answer, "What I have written I have written."

Those who were condemned to the cross were crucified naked; and their clothes always became the portion of the soldiers to whom the completion of the punishment was intrusted.

It would appear that our Lord's Crucifixion was performed by four soldiers, and they divided his clothes among them: but finding the outer garment woven of one piece, and consequently without seam, they cast lots for the possession of it, thus unwittingly fulfilling a prophecy of David in one of the Psalms relating to the Messiah (xxii. 19):—"They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots."

Many Jewish women, who had attached themselves to Christ as his disciples, and had followed him from Galilee, were now, in this hour of agony, assembled round the cross of their beloved teacher. Among them were the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and the sisters of Jesus's mother—Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Salome, the mother of John the Evangelist.

Consideration of this last circumstance, the presence of John's own mother, will give an increased interest to the touching incident which followed. Although suffering under the burden of his own intensest anguish, and borne down with the feeling of the guilt of sinful humanity, the Redeemer had still an affectionate remembrance of those whom he left behind. He



Women at the Crucifixion.—West.





## THE APOSTLE JOHN.

perceived the presence of John, the disciple who was honoured with his special attachment, and, referring to his own mother, Mary, he said to him, "Behold thy mother;" which was as much as to say, Be a son to her, even as to thine own mother now present. John understood him, and from that hour made his house the home of the bereaved Mary. From the circumstance that we find John at Jerusalem a long time after the ascension, it would seem that he had a dwelling in that city; and the fact that he alone was personally known to the people connected with the high-priest, affords much corroboration to this conclusion.

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## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

### CHAPTER XXXII.

MOCKERIES AND INSULTS OF THE JEWS—THE PENITENT THIEF—SIGNS ACCOMPANYING THE DEATH OF JESUS—JEWISH LAW RESPECTING THE BODIES OF CRIMINALS—NICODEMUS EMBALMS THE BODY OF CHRIST—IT IS LAID IN THE NEW SEPULCHRE OF JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA.



CHRIST was now upon the cross, undergoing one of the severest deaths which the cruelty of man ever invented ; and surely now the malice of his enemies was satiated ? Scarcely so. Even on the cross he was exposed to their insults and mockeries. They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads and saying, “Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” The chief priests, with the scribes and elders, also repeated the bitter scoff at one who, after having delivered others, proved unable, as they supposed, to deliver himself. “He saved others, himself he cannot save.” To all this, and even with regard to the sufferings and death to which they had brought him, Jesus only answered, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Christ suffered not alone : two robbers were crucified, one on each side of him. One of these two men, in the bitterness of his sufferings, railed at him, saying, “If thou be the Son of God, save thyself—and us.” But his companion rebuked him, by reminding him that they were suffering the just penalty of their transgressions,

"IT IS FINISHED."

whereas Jesus had been convicted of no wrong doing: and this man then said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The Divine Saviour answered—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *to-day* shalt thou be with me in Paradise!" We may be sure that, after that, this man's agonies fell lightly on him. What mattered the fleeting sufferings of noon, to one who, before the setting sun, was to taste the joys of Paradise?

By this time it was high noon, and nature refused any longer to withhold her dread sympathies—the sympathies which man denied. Darkness overspread the land from that time till three o'clock, the ninth hour, when Christ, in the deepest feeling of the guilt of the human family, the punishment of whose sin he had taken upon himself, cried out, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

The conflict was soon ended, and Jesus called for something to revive him, in the words "I thirst;" which thirst has been shown to be the natural result of the manner in which this kind of capital punishment acted upon the physical system of those who underwent it. It was customary at the commencement of a crucifixion to offer spiced wine to those who were to be executed, for the purpose of stunning them, and of deadening their sensibilities. This the soldiers had offered to Christ, but he refused it, preferring to go through these last sufferings with a clear and perfect consciousness. The soldiers had afterwards, in contemptuous sport, offered him sour wine to drink; and now a Jew, hearing his words, raised a sponge dipped in vinegar, on a hyssop stem, to his mouth. When Jesus had received this, he said, "IT IS FINISHED!"—the great work he came to do was accomplished; the dread penalties which he had incurred for the sins of men had been paid—ALL was finished: "and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost."

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At that greatest event which had ever happened in the world of spirits, the earth trembled. And now, since the guilt of man was blotted out, and salvation was no longer a thing of promise, but a present possession, the curtain of rich tapestry which in the temple separated the inner from the outer sanctuary was rent in twain, signifying that now, by the death of Christ, the human race were admitted to behold, without veil, the mysteries which had from the beginning of the world been hid with God.

Among the Romans the bodies of the crucified commonly hung upon the cross a considerable time, although in many cases they may have been given over to the friends of the deceased for the purpose of burial. But the Jewish law prescribed that criminals who were hanged up should be taken down on the same day. It was in particular deemed highly improper that the corpse of a criminal should be exposed to the eye upon a feast-day; and as, in this case, the Sabbath would commence at sunset, it became important that the bodies of those who had been crucified should be disposed of early. The soldiers, therefore, came to the crucified men in order to dispatch them, for it was not usual to find them dead so soon. The two robbers still existed, and their legs were broken with heavy blows to end their lives. But when they came to Jesus for the same purpose, they found that he was already dead, and forebore. Thus in the true Lamb of God was accomplished a fact typified in the Paschal Lamb, of which it was directed that "a bone of him should not be broken." A soldier, however, either to assure himself that he was indeed dead, or to destroy him in case there should still be life in him, thrust his spear into his side. Blood and water flowed from the wound, which seems to be mentioned by the Evangelist to show that he was already dead, and that if he had not been so, the wound would have sufficed to extinguish whatever remained of life.

## THE ENTOMBMENT.

It now became an object of solicitude to the disciples of Jesus that the body of their Divine Master should not be treated with disrespect. Among these disciples were several persons of consideration and influence; one of them, called Joseph, a native of the town of Arimathea (supposed to be the present Ramleh). He was one of those Jews who, like old Simeon, "waited for the kingdom of God;" and had already enrolled himself among the disciples of Jesus. He was a member of the Sanhedrim, and, as we may be sure, one of those who, as elsewhere mentioned, had opposed the madness of that assembly. His rank among the Jews assured him attention from Pilate, to whom he forthwith applied that the body might be given up to him. Notwithstanding the hours which had passed since the commencement of the crucifixion, Pilate manifested some surprise at hearing that Jesus was already dead, and sent for the Centurion who had charge of the execution to assure himself of the fact. He then freely placed the corpse at the disposal of Joseph, without requiring the money which the greedy Roman governors usually exacted for such a favour.

As the Jews were very anxious in matters of sepulture, and desired beyond most things an honourable grave for those they loved, this concession must have been regarded with great triumph by Joseph and the other friends of himself and of the crucified Saviour, who awaited the result of his application. Among these was Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrim, and the same who had come to Jesus by night at the commencement of his ministry. He had provided a large quantity—not less than a hundred pounds weight—of myrrh and aloes; costly articles, in which the body might be laid, and which evinces at once the wealth of Nicodemus and his veneration for Christ. The body was then taken down from the cross and wrapped up in linen clothes with the spices;

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and as the time was but short, they hastened, without completing the operations usually observed on such occasions, to lay the corpse in the new sepulchre, hewn in the rock, which Joseph had prepared for himself in a garden belonging to him, which was hard by the place of crucifixion.



Entombment of Christ.—Raffaello.







The Resurrection.—Raffaello.

## THE GUARD SET.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

A GUARD IS SET OVER THE SEPULCHRE—WOMEN REPAIR THITHER ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK—THE LORD IS RISEN—CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THE RESURRECTION—CHRIST APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE.



HE body of the blessed Jesus being thus decently and even honourably deposited in the sepulchre, his enemies, the priests and Pharisees, finding that the corpse had been given up to his friends, called to mind the words of Christ concerning his rising from the dead : and, in fear of the consequences which might ensue, they repaired to Pilate, requesting him to set a guard over the sepulchre to prevent the disciples from stealing away the body, and afterwards saying that their Lord had risen from the dead ; “ which last error,” they said, “ would be worse than the first.” Pilate told them that they had a military guard at their disposal, and that they might, if they pleased, employ it on that service. The sepulchre being thus given up to their custody, they sealed up the door, that they might know if it had been opened ; they then rolled a large stone to the entrance to render the opening difficult ; and, to crown all, a guard of soldiers was set to watch and keep the sepulchre. Thus it was providentially ordered that the custody of the tomb should be in the hands of the bitterest enemies of Christ, who had brought him to an ignominious death, to render it impossible

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that they, or any doubters after them, should, with any show of reason, be able to say that deception had been practised by the friends of Jesus.

The Sabbath passed with the usual observances; and then came the first day of the week, when the faithful disciples of Jesus could finish the decent observances towards the body of their crucified Lord, which on the Friday evening they had been constrained to leave incomplete. Many disciples were waiting for the morning, that they might hasten to the tomb; but, as usual in all cases where the finer feelings and inner sentiments are engaged, the women were foremost in their attentions and their cares. "Love," says good Bishop Hall, "is restless and fearless. In the dark of night these good women go to buy their spices, and ere the day break are gone from their own houses towards the tomb of Christ to bestow them. This sex is commonly fearful: it was much for them to walk alone in that unsafe season; yet, as despising all fears and dangers, they thus spent the night after their Sabbath. Might they have been allowed to buy their perfumes on the Sabbath, or to have visited that holy tomb sooner, can we think they would have stayed so long? Can we suppose that they would have cared more for the Sabbath than for the 'Lord of the Sabbath,' who now keeps his Sabbath in the grave? Sooner they could not come, later they would not, to present their last homage to their dead Saviour."

On the way to the garden, they talked of the difficulty of getting access to the tomb, on account of the stone at its mouth, which was far too great for their united strength to move.

The lively sorrow of Mary Magdalene led her, as they approached the sepulchre, to hurry on before the other women. She saw the great stone which had been placed at the mouth of the cave rolled aside, and the tomb open. Terrified at the sight, she





The Resurrection.—Rubens.

## THE ANGEL AT THE TOMB.

hastened away to impart the tidings to the male disciples of Jesus. When the other women drew nigh, they also were astonished to find that the sepulchre was open. Tremblingly they ventured in, and saw at once that the body of their Lord had disappeared. Much were they alarmed at this, and not less alarmed to perceive an angelic youth, vested all in white, who was seated on the right side of the tomb. On seeing him, they bowed their faces to the earth; and the angel said to them, "Be not affrighted: for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." He also reminded them how distinctly this had been foretold by Jesus himself, and after showing them the place where the Lord had lain, he enjoined them to go and declare these matters to Peter and the other disciples. They then hastened from the sepulchre "trembling and amazed," and hurried, with feet winged by joy, back to the city with their glad tidings.

And how had all these things come to pass, and what had become of the guard appointed to watch the tomb? There had been, at the first dawn of that morning, a great earthquake, in the midst of which the keepers of the tomb beheld an angel descend from heaven and roll back the stone from the door and seat himself thereon. "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and through fear of him the keepers did shake and become as dead men." When they had sufficiently recovered, they sped away to the chief priests, and rendered an account of what they had seen. This at first confounded them; but a council having been called, it was concluded to give money to the soldiers to induce them to say that the disciples of Jesus had come and taken away the body of their Lord while they were asleep. This was accordingly the story which they thenceforth

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promulgated, and which, the Evangelist states, was “commonly reported among the Jews unto this day.”

Meanwhile Mary Magdalene in her way to the city met with Peter and John, who were proceeding to the sepulchre. She, not having heard the communication of the angel to the other women, or indeed having seen the angel, eagerly stated what she herself inferred from the stone being rolled away, and the door being open:—“They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.” On hearing this, both the disciples began to run off to the sepulchre; and the enthusiasm of the “disciple whom Jesus loved” urged him on so that he outran Peter and arrived first at the tomb. Stooping down at the entrance, he perceived that the body of his Lord was indeed absent, and that the grave-clothes in which he had been wrapped were left behind; but he went not into the tomb, being perhaps overcome by a natural aversion, or being unwilling to incur without reason the seven days’ uncleanness which entrance into a tomb involved. By this time Peter also had come up, and being desirous of more exact information, went at once into the tomb, where he perceived that the napkin which had enveloped the head was not lying with the other linen clothes, but lay wrapped up by itself. On reporting this to his companion, John also went in to assure himself of the fact. From the importance attached to this circumstance, it would appear that they gathered from it that the body had not been stolen away. Had this been the case, the robbers would not first have carefully taken off the bandages, and have placed each one in a particular place: and hence it was natural for them to infer that he had risen from the dead. They therefore hastened away to impart these tidings to the other Apostles.







Christ appearing to Mary Magdalen.—Poussin

## CHRIST APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE.

Mary Magdalene, who had turned back with them to the sepulchre, remained behind after they had departed. She had not been aware of this new evidence, perhaps from not having arrived at the garden till Peter and John had gone away; or being aware of it, she had not drawn from it the same conviction which it brought to them. Full of anxious solicitude, Mary looked once more into the sepulchre, and beheld two angels in white, sitting the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. They said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" In the simplicity of her heart, she told them in plain words the cause of her grief, without immediately thinking on supernatural aid—"They have taken away my Lord," she said, "and I know not where they have laid him." When she had said this, a voice close behind her asked, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Taking the person who thus accosted her to be the gardener, and only half turning to him, she said in her usual simple and childlike manner, without any transport of fancy—"Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away?" On this the person to whom she had been speaking pronounced her name, "Mary!" in that dear and well-remembered voice, whose accents had more than once brought peace to her soul. On hearing it, she responded, "Rabboni!" and turning quickly round, fell at the feet of her risen Lord. Long she lay there, reverently embracing his feet, as if in fear that now he had risen, he would depart at once to Heaven, and she should behold his face no more. But at length he desired her to desist, declaring that he should not yet ascend unto his Father, so that his friends would have opportunities of seeing him again. He then sent her away to impart the fact of his resurrection to the apostles, and make known to them that he intended to

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meet them in Galilee. This was the same commission which the other women had received from the angel, and they were earlier than Mary in their intelligence. The disciples received their account with a kind of doubting confidence, some believed less and some more; but as a body they were left in a state of mind to require further evidence of a fact so strange and unexampled.

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Disciples at Emmaus.—Guerino.

## EMMAUS.

### CHAPTER XXXIV.

CHRIST REVEALS HIMSELF TO TWO DISCIPLES AT EMMAUS—TO THE COMPANY OF DISCIPLES AT JERUSALEM—TO THE UNBELIEVING THOMAS—THE CHARGE OF OUR LORD TO PETER—THE FEAST OF PENTECOST DRAWS NEAR—CHRIST GIVES HIS LAST CHARGE TO HIS DISCIPLES—LEADS THEM FORTH TO BETHANY—IS RECEIVED UP OUT OF THEIR SIGHT.



THE same evening, two men who had been disciples of Jesus, and whom many suppose to have been among the seventy, were returning to Emmaus, where they lived, from Jerusalem, where they had probably been attending the Passover. Emmaus was a small village distant about eight miles north-west of Jerusalem. On the way they were talking earnestly of the circumstances attending the death of Christ, and of the strange report which the women who went to the sepulchre had that morning brought to the disciples.

These men, after the death of Christ, seem no longer to have regarded him as the Messiah; nor had they much faith in the relations of the women, though their minds had been so far struck with their statements that they were, it seems, discussing their probability, and hesitating to believe what they had not themselves seen. As they were thus communing together they were joined by a stranger who entered into conversation with them. This was Jesus himself. But probably through Divine influence

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in connexion with the difference in his dress and the absence of any expectation of such a circumstance, he was not recognised by them. He asked them, "What manner of communications are these which ye have one to another as ye walk, and are sad?" In answer they expressed their surprise that any one coming from Jerusalem could be ignorant of things which had for some days been the common talk of the holy city. Jesus still asked, "What things?" Then they briefly recited how that Jesus of Nazareth, "a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people, had been delivered unto death by the



Christ at Emmaus.

chief priests and rulers;" and this put an end to the hopes which they and many others had cherished, for they had, they said, trusted that "this was He who should have delivered Israel." And besides this, some of their women had thrown them into amazement by asserting what seemed incredible—that they had been told by

## CHRIST AT EMMAUS.

angels that Jesus was still alive. Then Christ broke forth, "O misjudging! and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Then beginning at Moses, and so down through all the prophets, he opened to them the Scriptures concerning himself, showing how the ancient purposes of God had been accomplished, and salvation brought to mankind by those very things which appeared to them so mysterious and dark.

By the time the Lord had ended his discourse, the party had arrived near Emmaus, when perceiving that the instructive companion of their walk made a motion as if intending to proceed farther, they urged him to accompany them to their home in the village, and remain with them for the night, as the day was drawing towards its close. He yielded to their friendly importunities, and went. What further passed until supper time we know not; but at that meal the peculiar manner in which Jesus took and blessed the bread, and gave it to them—which besides was an unusual thing for a guest to do—revealed him to their knowledge. But before they could express their delight or reverence, he disappeared from their view. On this, although it was night, they girded up their loins and hastened back to Jerusalem, to make known to the apostles that the Lord had indeed risen. On the way they had new and higher matter for discourse, and they said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?" On their arrival at Jerusalem, they found the apostles and chosen disciples of Christ assembled together, and already well assured, from the evidence of Peter, that their Lord had risen from the dead. While they were talking of these matters, Jesus himself appeared



## LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR.

unexpectedly and suddenly among them, and saluted them in his usual manner—"Peace be unto you!" They were at first terrified at his appearance; for although they believed he *was* risen, the first appearance of one who had been dead, and had lain in the grave, suggested to their imagination the idea of a

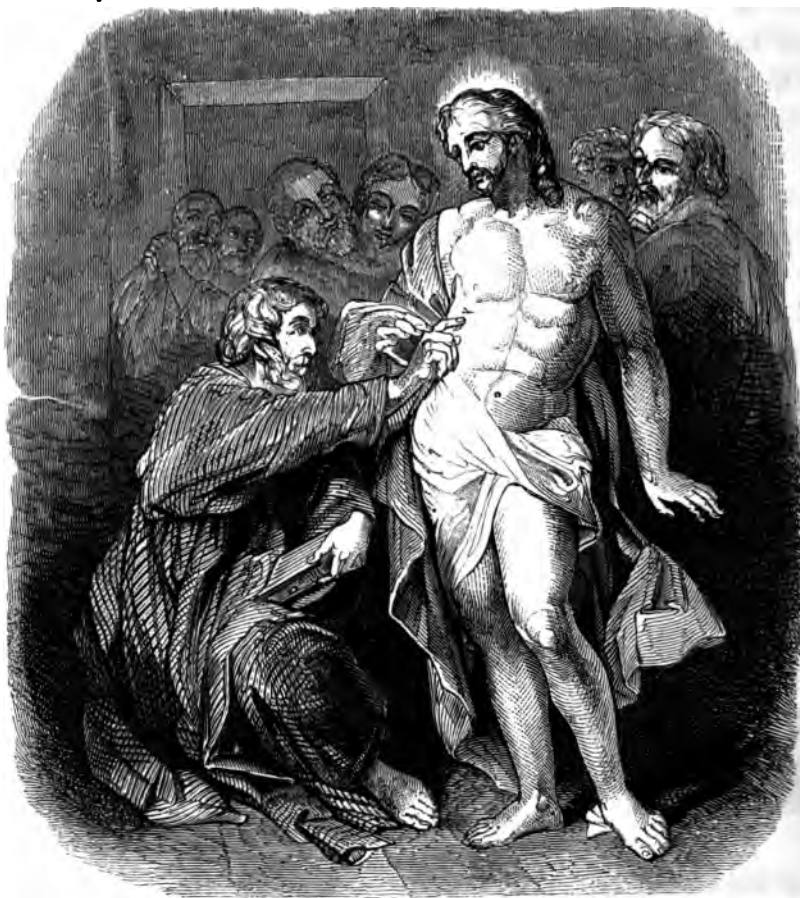


Christ appearing to his Disciples.

disembodied spirit. To disabuse them of this impression, he called their attention to the scars which the nails had left upon his hands and feet; and to feel that he still possessed a material body.

The apostle Thomas was not present at the time, and when told by the others that they had seen the Lord, he immediately expressed a strong doubt of the fact. They assured him that they had seen the marks of his wounds; and he then declared, that he must not only see, but put his finger into the prints of the nails, and his hand into the wounded side, before he could believe. Eight days





Incredulity of Thomas.—Vanderwerff.

## INCREDULITY OF THOMAS REBUKED.

after, Jesus again appeared to the disciples, when Thomas was among them. He addressed himself directly to the incredulous apostle, saying "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." On this the rebuked apostle was seized with a full and overflowing feeling of the supernatural in the fact which his cool mind had been disposed to distrust; and with intense acknowledgment he exclaimed, "My Lord, and my God!"

After this the apostles, who were all of Galilee, returned to their own province and to their friends, because Jesus had told them beforehand that they might there expect to hold further intercourse with him.

The apostles had then returned to their usual occupations; which does not, however, imply that they had abandoned the expectation of being employed in preaching the doctrine of Christ, since among the Jews the office of a teacher seldom excluded the prosecution of some trade, but on the contrary, the two were frequently combined. Seven of the disciples, all fishermen, were by the lake of Tiberias, and launched forth one evening to catch fish. They toiled all the night and caught nothing. When the morning broke, Jesus stood upon the shore, but in the dusk of the morning the fishermen knew not their master. He called to them, to ask if they had any fish. They still knew him not by his voice, but probably supposed him one who wished to purchase fish. They answered that they had none: on which he told them to cast their nets in on the right side of the ship, and they would find enough. Supposing that he might from the shore have observed something which led him to conclude that there were fish in that place,

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they followed the directions of the supposed stranger, and then they were unable to draw the net, from the multitude of fishes which it enclosed.

This miraculous draught immediately suggested to John that the stranger upon the shore was no other than the Lord, and he mentioned this to Peter, who no sooner heard it, than he cast himself into the sea, and swam to the land. The others came in their boat, dragging after them the net which contained not fewer than one hundred and fifty large fishes, and, although there were so many, the net was not broken. On landing, the disciples found a fire already kindled, with fish broiling thereon, with bread provided for their refreshment, and after some of the fish just caught had been added, Jesus said to them, "Come and dine."

After he had thus assured their minds, Christ addressed himself in a very pointed manner to Peter, who must be supposed in a peculiar state of mind with reference to the recent denial of his Lord, and asked him whether he now, according to his former declaration, loved him with more entire devotedness than others, in the words, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" Peter dared not again make a bold promise. He mistrusted his own knowledge of himself, and answered only by a touching appeal to the consciousness of Christ—"Yea, Lord, *thou knowest* that I love thee." Then Christ called upon him to prove his words by his actions, in the emphatic words, "Feed my lambs!" After a while Jesus repeated the question, and having received the same answer, charged him—"Feed my sheep." Once more he pronounced the question; and although Peter was distressed at the doubt implied in its repetition, the feeling of inward attachment was now so strong within him, that he appealed



Christ's Charge to Peter.—Raffaello.

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The Ascension.—Rubens.



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## THE ASCENSION.

with entire confidence to the high knowledge of the heart which his Divine Master possessed: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." To this Christ repeated the same significant charge; and then at once proceeded to apprise him, in language not to be mistaken, of the testimony of love to Christ which would thereafter, in his old age, be required from him, by the violent death on the cross which he would then be called upon to suffer.

John, who had always been present at confidential conversations, also joined them here. Peter, actuated more by idle curiosity than by real solicitude for John, was led by this to ask what was to be *his* future lot; but Jesus, who in his answers had always regard to the moral condition of the questioner, answered evasively: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow *thou* me." This doubtless refers to the time of the destruction of the Hebrew polity and temple, which John survived; but some were led to conceive by this that the beloved disciple would never die, and the curious inquirer into ecclesiastical history meets with many traces of this opinion.

Forty days after the Passover came the feast of Pentecost; and some days before this the disciples returned to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. There they were again met by Jesus, who gave them his last and most important charge, enjoining them to remain at Jerusalem till they were gifted with powers from on high, after which they were to go abroad among the nations, "preaching the Gospel to every creature."

He then led them forth to the Mount of Olives, as far as Bethany, where he lifted up his hands to bestow on them his last solemn blessing; and while his hands were still outspread as in the act of blessing, he arose gradually from among them, and disappeared

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in the heavens—"Where he sitteth on the right hand of God."  
The disciples then returned with joyful hearts to Jerusalem,  
where they were constantly in the temple praising and blessing  
God.



Faith.—Reynolds.









